SHE THINKS FOR HERSELF.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

" Though plung'd in ills, and exercis'd in care,
" Yet never let the noble mind despair :
" When prest by dangers, and beset by foes,
" The gods their timely succour interpose ;
" And when our virtue sinks, o'erwhelm'd with grief,
" By unforeseen expedients bring relief."

PHILIPS.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

"*She* reads much;
"*She* is a great observer; and *she* looks
"Quite through the deeds of men."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE pen of a Richardson or a Burney is possessed but by a privileged few, and a still less number can boast of having excelled in the pleasing horrors of a Radcliffe. Novels and Romances issue daily from the press, but assuredly

much fewer of the latter have attained mediocrity than of the former; and, in my opinion, a bad Romance is still more insipid and insupportable than a bad Novel. Conscious, therefore, of the difficulty of gaining celebrity in either, I shall confine myself to the recital of real occurrences; and, being willing to satisfy the curiosity which I have presupposed in my reader, I shall begin by giving a description and short account of myself.

From my birth I seemed destined to be rather a Spectator than an Actor on the stage of life. My diminutive person, and plain countenance, (on which, however, the eye of discernment might perceive the traces of habitual good humour and content,) effectually screen-

ed me from the notice of the men, and I was fated never to know the pleasing flattery, and seducing attentions, which render their company so captivating to the young and beautiful of my sex. Thus at the time when most girls enter into life, I began forcibly to feel the necessity of seeking for happiness in the resources of my own mind. I found it in books, and in observing the actions and manners of others, from which I learned to congratulate myself on my own unexposed situation; safe from the temptations to which I too often saw beauty and accomplishments fall a victim.

At the age of forty, having lost my only remaining parent, I retired to the village of Heathdale, on the

western side of Sussex, where I now reside.

I will allow that having been accustomed, for many years, to search into the motives of the conduct which I have observed, in order to develope the workings of the human mind, I may perhaps have somewhat of the curiosity of an old maid; but from the ill-nature unjustly attributed to that character, I can assure my reader that I am perfectly exempt; of which indeed my person, could they see me, would be a sufficient proof. Having no cares to perplex me, from continual ease and good humour, I am grown so fat, that my figure is absolutely round, and I can compare it to nothing more aptly than to a

dumpling; under which appellation I am generally known by the children in the place.

Having premised thus much, I shall no longer solicit the attention of the reader to my own concerns, but immediately introduce him to my Dramatis Personæ.

SHE THINKS FOR HERSELF.

CHAP. I.

" The web of our life is of a mingled yarn,
" Good and ill together; our virtues would be
" proud,
" If our faults whipped them not; and our
" crimes
" Would despair, if they were not cherish'd
" by our virtues."

SHAKSPEARE.

AT the period when I took up my abode in the village of Heathdale, the families which rose in rank above the

common mass of the inhabitants, consisted of a clergyman, with two sons and a daughter; the lord of the manor, who had two nephews residing with him; and a widow lady, with one daughter: the latter were of the Roman Catholic persuasion, and a priest of that religion made one of their family.

Mr. Unwin, the rector of the parish, was a man who did honour to his profession. The teacher of a mild and merciful religion, he practised all its duties; and while he preached charity to others, he was not intolerant himself. We look in vain for perfection in this sublunary world, or it would have been found in the character of Mr. Unwin. Unconscious of evil himself, he suspected it not in others; and a too great easiness of temper sometimes laid him open to the snares of the crafty and designing. He had lost his wife, a most worthy woman, about a twelvemonth

before the commencement of this history. His eldest son, William, was then three-and-twenty; Frederic two years younger; and Louisa eighteen.

William Unwin inherited all the excellent qualities of his father; together with a firmness, which, united to a high sense of religion, enabled him to restrain his passions, naturally fervent. His heart was alive to all the tenderest sensations of humanity, yet there was a reserve in his disposition which induced him to conceal its emotions, and by those little acquainted with him, he was thought proud and unbending. He was designed for the church, and was in deacon's orders.

Frederic was all life, spirit, and animation. In his person shone the graces of luxuriant health, and manly beauty. Impatient of restraint, his soul revolted against the sternness of admonition, but to the voice of persuasion he was pliable

as the bending reed. He was romantic in his ideas, and quick and ardent in his feelings, which were not always amenable to the dictates of prudence. He had been clerk to a merchant, and was now residing at home till his father could hear of a partnership for him, or a proper situation in which to commence business for himself.

Louisa in some respects resembled her younger brother, yet there were many shades of difference in their characters. Her beauty was of a milder kind, softened by female elegance and modesty: her dark eyes now sparkled with animation, and now glistened with sensibility: she was lively and giddy, but when she had committed a fault, her ingenuous heart was ever ready to acknowledge it. Brought up in the habit of industry, and possessing the accomplishments of her sex, she had learnt the art of employing

her time to advantage; and knew not ennui though resident in a country village.

From these characters let us turn to that of Mr. Raynsford; to him the manor of Heathdale belonged, and his income was supposed to be more than five thousand a year. He had passed the prime of his life in London, and been one of the gayest of the gay: there, among his libertine companions, he had imbibed the principles of atheism; too often the retreat of the gamester and the debauchee from the terrors of an accusing conscience. His acquaintance with women lying chiefly among those who were lost to modesty, he had a mean opinion of the sex in general; and thought that man a fool who in such an age would venture upon a wife. Wearied out, at length, with the round of dissipation, and a martyr to the gout, he retired, at the

age of fifty, to reside upon his estate, there to rail at the follies of which he could no longer partake, and busy himself with the gossip of the village instead of the anecdotes of the more polite world. One of his sisters had married young, and had become an early victim to the misery entailed by her imprudent choice. Her husband, an officer in the army, soon after fell in battle, leaving her two boys unprovided orphans; whom Mr. Raynsford, having no children of his own, (or none that he chose to acknowledge) adopted. He put them to a public school, and afterwards to college, declaring them his heirs, but left them to form their minds and dispositions according to their own inclinations, or the company which they might chance to meet with. Having no sense of religion himself, he did not see the necessity of it for them.

The two brothers were of very different dispositions. Montague Dorian was cool, artful, designing, and premature in worldly wisdom; having been remarked at school for the subtlety with which he extricated himself from scrapes while he involved others. Wholly intent upon his own pleasures, he scrupled no means of gratifying his passions that were unattended with danger; and without disbelieving Revelation, of which, in truth, he was deplorably ignorant, he had never given himself the trouble to examine its authenticity. Yet with these qualities, specious in his conduct, and polished in his manners, he was so well skilled in the art of making himself agreeable, that his vices were overlooked, or ascribed to the wildness of youth; and he was generally received by the neighbouring families.

Edward Dorian was naturally of an

excellent disposition, and, had it been matured by a good education, he might have been an honour to mankind. Though his passions were strong, his heart was tender, and capable of the most refined and lasting impressions. Sensible of his brother's faults, he was determined to guard against similar errors in his own conduct: but, conversant in the writings of Voltaire, Hume, and Gibbon, he had imbibed a prejudice against the impositions, (as he thought them) of Christianity. The world to him rolled on in an unvaried course; the Deity, having once fixed its laws, looked with an eye of unconcern on the actions of men; and he wished to prove, by his own example, that the light of reason was sufficient to keep mankind within the rules of moral virtue. Generous and beneficent, he never turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of distress; and his uncle's liberal

allowance, (who wished not to restrain the pleasures of his heirs,) enabled him to gratify his benevolent propensities.

Mrs. Neville, the widow before mentioned, was a well disposed woman; but, too much immersed in the bigotry of her religion to think for herself, her actions were under the guidance of her confessor. Like too many fond mothers she had not the resolution to refuse her daughter any thing that she requested; and Emma, indulged in every wish, was little able to bear the stings of disappointment, or to practise the severity of self-denial.

Miss Neville's disposition was mild and amiable, and her heart full of sensibility. Her soft blue eyes were usually cast down, her hair was flaxen, and Grecian symmetry shaped the oval of her lovely countenance. Her person was small, but exactly proportioned; and her sylph-like figure was pecu-

liarly graceful when she touched the guitar, and accompanied it with her harmonious voice.

Having thus let my reader into the characters of my neighbours, I shall proceed to develope their history.

CHAP: II.

"Her form was fresher than the morning rose,
"When the dew wets its leaves; unstain'd, and
"pure,
"As is the lilly, or the mountain snow."
—— "Thoughtless of beauty, she was beauty's
"self."

THOMPSON.

—— "Spirit nurs'd
"In blind infallibility's embrace,
"The sainted spirit, petrify'd the breast."

YOUNG.

IT was a most beautiful morning in the beginning of May, the shower of the preceding night still hung in trembling drops upon the shrubs, when Frederic Unwin left his bed to visit his old nurse, to whom, from infancy, he

had been tenderly attached. She had lived in his father's family from the time of his marriage, till she gave her hand to Mr. Dobson, (a worthy man, who rented a small farm of Mr. Raynsford;) and, being at this time recently a widow, was thought by Frederic to call for every attention in his power.

He had scarcely entered the garden, when he perceived, through the window, a female figure conversing with Mrs. Dobson. He saw that she was dressed in white, and appeared genteel, therefore naturally supposed it to be Miss Neville; but how great was his surprise, on his entrance, in beholding a total stranger! On seeing him she arose, and while a blush suffused her intelligent features, she made him a slight courtesy, and withdrew. Frederic was too much lost in astonishment to attempt to detain her; but when she had left the room he exclaimed, "For pity's sake,

nurse, tell me who that angel is!" Mrs. Dobson sat down in her wicker chair, and deliberately smoothing her apron, told him that her name was Miss Dudley. "I pity the poor child," continued she, "and hope that she will escape the perils which lie in her way. God knows this world is full enough of afflictions; but it is our duty to be resigned:" and she wiped away a tear, telling him that she had intended coming to his father's that evening, to inform them of all she knew. "Yet I should not say that either," she added, "for I have promised to keep it secret." "And certainly you do not break your word, my dear nurse," replied Frederic, with a good-humoured smile, "for though I am dying with curiosity, you have yet told me nothing but her name." After many circumlocutions, which almost exhausted his patience, she informed him that her brother,

Walter Jones, who formerly lived with his father, and afterwards went into service in Hampshire, had brought Miss Dudley the day before, and begged her to take her in as a boarder. "I did not know what to say to it," continued the good woman, "as she was such a stranger, like, and I did not chuse to put questions before her; so I asked her to take a walk in the garden, while I talked over the matter with Walter. To be sure I was taken with her looks, and when I heard her story, and how ill she had been used, I was willing enough to do any thing to serve her, and please my brother. Would you believe it, Mr. Frederic, when he heard that I had lost my husband, he was so good as to leave his place on purpose to help me in managing the farm: so that, in the midst of my trouble, God has not forgotten to be gracious." "I am very glad that your

brother is come to assist you," replied Frederic, "but, dear nurse, may not I know, at least, who Miss Dudley is, and where she comes from?" Mrs. Dobson shook her head. "I can tell you nothing of all this, my dear young master, because I promised to keep it secret, and to be sure you would not wish me to break my word. I can only say that she is to live with me, and to have the little parlour to herself, except when I have a few neighbours to drink tea, and that will not be at present. She is willing, she says, to do what she can to help me, to make amends for being too poor to give much for her board; but she hopes to get money by writing something about French books, (I did not quite understand what she meant), and then she will pay me better. However I am very easy about that, if I can get on, for Walter says that she is the best creature

the sun ever shone upon, and I am sure she is the sweetest. If you had but seen how the young squire looked at her last night! I'll engage that he thought her very pretty: don't you?" "Certainly," returned Frederic; "but how came Mr. Dorian to see her?" Mrs. Dobson informed him that he had passed by the house, and seeing Miss Dudley at the window, had called, she supposed, on that account. "No doubt," answered Frederic, tartly, "but I hope, nurse, that you warned her of Montague's character: his principles, with regard to women, are bad, and Miss Dudley is too beautiful not to be a desirable object in his eyes." Mrs. Dobson said that, if such were the case, she would give the poor child an item of it, but she had never known any harm of the young squire; for, though not so good as his brother, she had heard that he was very generous. Frederic

stood musing for some time, and then exclaimed, "There seems an extraordinary mystery about this young lady, nurse; but I hope that I shall one day be let into the secret: at any rate I must see the charming girl again. Do you think she was frightened at me, that she left the room so suddenly?" Nurse replied that Miss Dudley was just going up stairs, to take off her hat after a walk, when he came in. "But," added she, "if Miss Louisa would have the goodness to notice her, I dare say that she would tell her all her story; and then you too could visit her with your sister." Frederic now, for the first time, recollecting that he had come out without his breakfast, and that the family would be waiting for him at home, thanked Mrs. Dobson for her information, and hurried away. His feet carried him from the farm, but his thoughts reverted to the interesting un-

known. He had but a slight glimpse of her, yet, with the impetuosity of a youthful mind, his imagination filled up the outline with every pleasing, every valuable endowment. Pity lent her aid to the prepossession; representing Miss Dudley as a helpless female, driven by persecution from her natural protectors, and forced to seek among strangers for that peace which she was not allowed to enjoy in the bosom of her own family. Pursuing these ideas, Frederic, by the time he reached home, had accounted perfectly to his own satisfaction for Miss Dudley's appearance at Heathdale. Entering the breakfast room, he threw himself upon a chair in a fit of absence, which made him forget the compliments of the morning. Louisa presented him with a cup of tea, and smiling archly at William, asked him if he had seen his brother before. "It is a very fair reproof, my dear sister,"

cried Frederic, recollecting himself; "but your looks tell me that it is needless to inquire after your health." "Ah that is nothing," replied Louisa, gaily; "have you not heard, my good brother, that the looks of women are deceitful to a proverb?" "They have been represented so," said her father, "but I will not have my Louisa classed with the least estimable of her sex." "It is my opinion," observed Frederic, "that some cynics who had outlived the favor of the ladies, combined to revenge themselves on the most charming part of the creation, by giving currency to such false and malicious accusations." "Who can look at your friend, Emma," said William to his sister, "and suppose that deceit can have taken up its residence in her soft eyes?" "On the contrary," replied she, "every emotion of her heart is expressed in her countenance: too much so indeed, for it be-

trays sentiments that she would wish to conceal. Who has not perceived her partiality for Edward Dorian?" William arose and walked to the window.

The breakfast things were hardly removed when Mr. Raynsford made his appearance, and inquired if Mr. Unwin had heard any particulars of his new parishioner? "New parishioner!" repeated Mr. Unwin, "I was altogether ignorant that I had one." "Aye, but you have," returned he, "and a fine girl she is, as my nephew Montague informs me. She is to live with the widow Dobson, and your old servant, Walter Jones, was her squire when she came to Heathdale. Who she is, or where she comes from, is all a mystery; but I'll venture to say, that if she is in search of a husband, and thinks to take in my nephew, she will find herself confoundedly mistaken. No, no, Montague will not fall into the snares of a

girl of sixteen." "How illiberal," exclaimed Frederic, who could no longer restrain his indignation, "to suppose that Miss Dudley has any such intention." His father looked surprised, and his brother asked him how long he had known the lady in question? He related the slight view which he had of her that morning; and then added, "But it is not because I have seen her that I stand up in her vindication, but because I think no one's character ought to be condemned when unknown. This lady is a perfect stranger, and, in all probability, was ignorant when she came to the place that such a person as Mr. Dorian was in existence." "Well, well, young man," said Mr. Raynsford, "I suppose that you are not more invulnerable to the charms of a pretty face than your neighbours; and when you have been as many years in the world as I have, you will learn to

look no further for perfection." "God forbid," replied Frederic, "that I should live to be such a misanthrope as the belief of that would make me." Mr. Raynsford burst into a loud laugh, and singing a line of an old song, took his departure. "What an odd mortal!" cried Miss Unwin, as soon as he had closed the door. "But do tell us who this Miss Dudley is." Frederic imparted all the information that he had gained: when his sister gave her opinion that the stranger must surely be some romantic girl, seduced by the fanciful descriptions of the poets, to imagine that happiness was only to be found among flocks and herds. "For what else," pursued she, "could have induced so young a person to leave her friends and come here, a total stranger, upon the plan of assisting in a farm house." Her brother reminded her that Mrs. Dobson, who knew her story,

said, that she had been ill-used. "However that may be," said Mr. Unwin, "she seems to be in need of protection. Suppose, Louisa, that you were to call upon her; an acquaintance of her own sex must be a desirable acquisition." To this proposal, Miss Unwin readily agreed; saying, that she would go as soon as she had arranged her domestic affairs.

In the mean time, the whole village was busily employed in conjectures concerning Miss Dudley. Such an incident was too uncommon, in so remote a place as Heathdale, not to afford ample subject for conversation. Mrs. Neville's maid was not the last to hear of it, and not being endowed with the gift of taciturnity, took the first opportunity to tell it, with many additions of her own, to her young mistress. Among other things, she mentioned, that people said Miss Dudley was kept by young Mr. Dorian.

"Mr. Dorian!" repeated Emma, faintly. "St. Ursula protect us!" exclaimed Agnes, "How pale you are, madam! Shall I get you any thing?" "No, it is nothing," replied Miss Neville. "What were you saying about Mr. Edward Dorian?" Agnes answered, that it was Mr. Montague she was talking of. "True," returned Emma, and her cheeks glowed with the consciousness of her own thoughts, "what of Montague?" At that moment, she saw Edward approaching the house; and, willing to save herself the confusion of entering the parlour when he was there, hurried down stairs, without waiting for a reply.

Miss Dudley, as was the case in every other house in the parish, again furnished the subject of conversation. Father Celestin, the Romish priest, gravely remarked, that her coming to reside there out of the reach and know-

ledge of all her friends, as appeared to be the case, was the peculiar interposition of Heaven in favour of her sinful soul; that it might, by him, be brought into the pale of the holy mother church. "Do you suppose, then," said Edward, "that the difference of purity between one Christian sect and another, allowing your's to be the best, would sufficiently counterbalance the various temptations to which she may be exposed, from her unprotected situation?" "Our holy religion," replied the priest, "will give her absolution for all her sins: an advantage which she cannot, let her be ever so wicked, receive among heretics." "You think, then," returned Edward, "that the most grievous sinner, because he can obtain absolution, is more likely to be saved in your church, than the man who conscientiously follows the precepts of the Gospel, if he has had the misfortune to be brought

up in any other persuasion. What do you think of it, Miss Neville?" "Emma," said her mother, "does not pretend to be a casuist in matters of religion; but leaves her faith to those who have studied it, and must be supposed to understand it best." "Surely it is to ourselves, that our salvation is of the most consequence," answered Edward; "and shall we then leave to others the task of ascertaining its security? If it is a difficult study, it behoves us the more to employ our best faculties upon so important a subject." "Reason is fallible," said the priest, sternly; "our holy father, the pope, is not so. It is the propagation of such doctrines as your's that has undermined our sacred religion. Daughter," continued he, turning to Mrs. Neville, "you will keep up your connections with heretics till your only child is corrupted, and left as a mark for the strong

bolts of the arch deceiver." Emma turned pale with apprehension: and Mrs. Neville, addressing Edward with an air of confusion, told him, that she much esteemed his character; yet, rather than expose her daughter to the imminent danger which Father Celestin apprehended, she must decline his future visits. Edward's cheek flushed with indignation. "And these men would persuade us," he exclaimed, "that there is a Providence which governs the earth: when their own conduct, in the strongest manner, gives the lie to their doctrine!" He rose, bowed to Mrs. Neville, and casting a look of anguish upon Emma, who was scarcely able to support herself, hastily raised his hand to his lips, and left the room. "Good Heavens, my love!" said Mrs Neville, seeing Emma ready to faint, "what ails you: from whence arises this extraordinary emotion?" The

poor girl, unable to reply, reclined her head upon her mother's shoulder, and burst into tears. "It is as I have said," cried the confessor; "that heretic has turned the poor child's brain: and he is not only a heretic, though that would be bad enough, but he is not even a Christian. Did you not remark the disrespect which he betrayed for the clergy in general, the strongest bulwarks of the christian faith." "Oh, no, father," said Emma, raising her head, "indeed you misunderstood him: he could not mean to offend you: Edward would not, for the world, do any thing which he thought wrong." "Madam," cried the haughty priest, "when you have taught your daughter the respect which is due to my opinions, I will see her again:" with these words, he immediately left the room. Father Celestin's displeasure, to which she was unused, for she had never before con-

tradicted him, added to her separation from her lover, was too much for Emma's delicate constitution: she fell into hysterics, and was conveyed to bed by her anxious mother.

Mrs. Neville was distracted between her affection for her daughter, and a fear of incurring the anathemas of the church, by allowing of her attachment to an unbeliever. She trembled too for her child's eternal happiness, should she contract an engagement with Edward: for Mrs. Neville firmly believed, that salvation was only to be found in the bosom of the Romish religion.

Keenly did she regret her own want of discernment, which had prevented her from perceiving their inclinations, while it was yet time to repress the infant passion. What hope, indeed, could there now be, that they should gain so important a victory over themselves; when the aids of religion were with-

holden from the one, and firmness of mind was wanting to the other.

It may appear extraordinary, that Emma should have concealed her attachment to Edward Dorian from so affectionate a parent; but she had loved almost without being conscious of it herself: it had 'grown with her growth, and strengthened with her strength.' From the cottagers she heard the praises of Edward; and her own observation shewed her his many amiable, his many brilliant qualities: for he possessed uncommon genius and abilities, and he had not suffered them to lie dormant. In loving him, she thought that she paid but the customary tribute to his virtues: nor, till he confessed his passion, did she discover the nature of her feelings; and they had then gained too firm an ascendency for her to think, without anguish, of subduing them. Conscious that, notwithstanding her

mother's usual indulgence, she would never countenance her connection with a heretic, she carefully concealed her sentiments: but had Mrs. Neville entertained the least suspicion of the truth, she must have read her emotions in her tell-tale countenance.

It had not, however, with that lady, entered into the circle of human probabilities, that her daughter could think of any one out of the pale of her own church, when Mr. Fitzherbert, an agreeable young man, and a good catholic, was their constant visitor. Father Celestin was more clear-sighted; he had long suspected their attachment, and waited but for an opportunity to draw forth Edward's sentiments on religious subjects, to persuade Mrs. Neville to forbid him the house.

There was little difficulty in leading him into the snare. Edward's open

and generous nature disdained the meanness of subterfuge: nor would he, for the highest bribe this world could afford, (and could a greater have been offered to him than the possession of his beloved Emma,) have descended to falsify his principles. How much was it to be lamented that these principles were not more worthy of the firmness with which they were maintained. Oh, baleful doctrines of Voltaire! Among the thousands of disciples which ye have made, how few there are who possess the moral character of Edward Dorian!

On leaving Mrs. Neville's he had bent his steps towards a large common, overgrown with heath and broom, there to indulge the anguish that he experienced from the prohibition which he had received. His heart now swelled with indignation against the haughty confessor, and he execrated priest-

craft, with all the horrors which it had brought into the world: again he melted into tenderness as fancy brought to his view Emma's mild graces and timid loveliness; and he felt fully assured that her heart would never be given to another, however her person might be separated from him. "And shall fierce bigotry and weak superstition," he exclaimed, "divide two beings formed for each other, whose happiness depends upon their union? Surely reason does not authorize such a sacrifice?" After a long debate with himself, he at length determined to endeavour to see Emma without her mother's knowledge: or, failing in that, to write to her, and persuade her, if possible, to consent to a private marriage.

CHAP. III.

"Greatness of mind and nobleness their
"seat
"Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
"About her, as a guard angelic plac'd."

MILTON.

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
"Which, taken at the flood, leads on to
"fortune."

SHAKSPEARE.

WE will now return to Louisa, whom we left going to pay a visit to Miss Dudley. She had not reached the park gate when Frederic overtook her; and observing that he had a violent curiosity to see if the young stran-

ger answered the idea which he had formed from a slight view of her person, begged her to take him with her. "Remember what Mr. Raynsford told you," replied his sister: "is your heart invulnerable to the charms of beauty? If not, and you should fall into any mischance which may date its origin from this visit, recollect, I beseech you, that I am not to be accountable for it: don't imagine that I have ensured your tranquillity, and that you are to come upon me for the full value of your losses." Frederic answered gaily, that he was willing to brave the consequences, and they soon arrived at the farm. Mrs. Dobson, upon being informed of the purport of their visit, shewed them into the parlour, and telling them that Miss D. was unpacking, went to announce their arrival. The white-washed walls of the apartment, which used to look rather cheerless,

were now decorated with many beautiful drawings: Thomson's Seasons lay open upon the table, and several of the poets were arranged upon the window seat. Louisa remarked that she was surely right in her conjectures concerning the romantic——when her brother interrupted her, with "Hush! she is coming."

Miss Dudley, upon her entrance, coloured on reognising Frederic; but, soon recovering herself, saluted them in a graceful and easy manner. She told them that what she had heard, from her good friend Walter, of Mr. Unwin's family, made their visit peculiarly grateful to her feelings: the more so as it was unexpected. "I am conscious," continued she, "that my unprotected situation must wear an appearance of mystery; and give rise to many unfavourable conjectures. There are few people who, like Miss Unwin,

can overcome prejudice, and be the first to notice a friendless female, of whose character and connections they are entirely ignorant." Louisa could scarcely recover sufficiently from her surprise to return a suitable answer to this compliment; so different was Miss Dudley from what she had expected. She had represented her to herself as pretty, indeed, for she had heard that she was so, but her beauty vacant and unmeaning: and she supposed that she would possess too much *mauvaise honte* to receive strangers with politeness. On the contrary, she found that her beauty consisted more in the expression of her features than in their regularity. Energy of mind was marked in her penetrating eyes, yet their fire was softened by the sweetness of modesty: her person was tall, and finely formed; and a dignity in her manner repressed the presumption of those, whom the

prospect of impunity might otherwise have tempted to treat her with disrespect. Most pleasingly disappointed, Louisa was delighted with her new acquaintance, and expressed a hope that they should meet often. Miss Dudley said that she would not encroach upon her goodness; she had no right to expect her friendship till she had explained her conduct; she could not bear to appear in an equivocal light to those whose esteem she valued: and, whenever Miss Unwin could spare her an hour or two of her time, she would give her a short but faithful narrative of her life. Louisa accepted the offer with pleasure, and proposed drinking tea with her that afternoon; which was agreed upon.

Frederic now asked Miss Dudley if the beautiful drawings, which he had been admiring, were her performance. She replied in the affirmative; adding,

"The pleasure which a much loved friend's partiality induced her to take in seeing her apartment hung with my productions, was the cause of my sparing no exertions to cultivate the little talent I possessed; that friend is now no more, and these pieces have reverted to their first owner; endeared by the recollection of her whose fond eye has frequently dwelt upon them with delight."

After a little more conversation, Miss Unwin, renewing her promise of the afternoon visit, rose to depart. Frederic told Miss Dudley, that though he should not presume to intrude upon her *tête-à-tête* with his sister, yet he hoped she would not deny a half civilized being the advantage of polishing by her society. "You will take pity on me," said he; "and perhaps sometimes allow me to read to you your favourite poets, while you are engaged with your draw-

ing, or work." "If Miss Unwin should think me worthy of her friendship," she replied, "I cannot refuse admittance to her brother." She blushed as she spoke; and feared that she had said too much. Frederic's eyes dwelt on her with admiration: nor, till his sister told him that she was waiting for him, did he recollect that they were standing; when he begged pardon for his inattention, and they wished Miss Dudley a good morning.

"What an interesting charming girl!" he exclaimed, as they walked homewards. "Oh, Louisa! how much you were mistaken in your opinion!" "I assure you," replied his sister, "that I had scarcely heard her speak when my conscience reproached me for my want of candour; and the credit which she gave me for liberality I felt was so thoroughly undeserved, that I could with difficulty return an answer."

Frederic entreated that his sister would, if possible, prevail upon Miss Dudley to let her communicate to him the particulars of her history, which Louisa readily promised, declaring that she should count the minutes with impatience till she rejoined her new acquaintance. Upon their return, Mr. Unwin heard with pleasure the account which they gave of their visit, expressing himself highly interested in the promised narrative.

At the unfashionable hour of five, Louisa hastened to the farm, and Miss Dudley received her with unaffected satisfaction. Reserve soon wore off; and when they had finished the exhilarating meal, Miss Dudley began her relation in these words.

"If happiness or misery depended solely upon outward occurrences, and not upon the temper of mind with

which we are blest, my lot, (except for one circumstance of my life,) might be classed with the most unfortunate. Doomed never to know a father's care, or a mother's fondness, I was placed, from the first of my remembrance, as a parlour-boarder, at a school in Hampshire. While I was little I was the plaything of the governess and teachers. They forgot that I was a rational being, and entertained themselves with the humours which a spoiled child will invariably display, as they would have done with the tricks of a monkey. Indulged in all my little whims, I soon grew insufferably tiresome; their patience was exhausted; it was no longer the fashion to admire me; and I experienced all the unkindness and neglect of a favourite in disgrace. If I but spoke or moved in the parlour, I was reproved with the great-

est harshnesss ; and if I ventured into the school I was told that they did not want spoiled children there.

Thus universally rejected, my spirits were broken, and I wandered about the house and garden, a disconsolate being, who belonged to nobody, and for whom no one seemed interested. Whole hours have I wept at the thoughts of my desolate situation; my soul thirsted for a friend to whom I could unburden my sorrows. I was not quite seven years old, when Heaven, in pity to my sufferings, sent me that friend in the person of Mrs. Willoughby. This lady had taken an apartment in the house, and was to board with the family. Never shall I forget the day of her arrival! I was sitting in an arbour in the garden, when she came into it with my governess; she noticed my forlorn appearance, and asked her companion who I was. Mrs. Smith answered, that

I was a most untoward child, who had been placed under her care by my guardians; and she feared that she should be encumbered with me for life. "Go up to your own room, Miss," continued she, "you are enough to make any body sick to look at you." My clothes were indeed shamefully neglected, and it was seldom that I was fit to be seen. I arose, with the sullenness of despair, when Mrs. Willoughby called me to her, and taking my hand, "There is something in this child that interests me," said she; "you and I must be better acquainted; tell me what makes you look so melancholy?" Unused to the voice of kindness, I burst into tears: she appeared shocked and affected. "Had my dear Maria lived, she would have been about your age," she continued; "tell me, will you supply her place; shall I be your mamma?"

My sobs redoubled; and hiding my face in her gown, I replied, "I must not have such a sweet lady for my mamma! I have no mamma! nobody loves me!" "What do you mean, Selina?" cried my governess, "I always love you when you are good:" but I had experienced the contrary too much for this speech to make the smallest impression. Mrs. Willoughby, wiping the tears from my glowing cheek, told me, that she would love me; and if I would return her affection, and do as she bade me, she would be always kind to me. Oh! how my heart swelled with gratitude towards that dear woman! My feelings were too big for utterance; I could only kiss her hand, and weep with joy. Indeed it was almost impossible to look at Mrs. Willoughby without loving her: there was a pensive melancholy, a dignified sweetness in her air and man-

ner, that attracted the sympathy of every feeling heart. Her husband, to whom she was tenderly attached, lost his life about a year before, by a fall from his horse; and her only child, soon after, fell a victim to an epidemic fever. The world had then no charms for her; she could no longer bear the scenes that had witnessed her felicity; and, by the recommendation of a friend, who knew not Mrs. Smith's real character, she was induced to seek for tranquillity in the shades of Elmwood. How fortunate was it for me that she did so! From that day I was her constant companion; as my governess, glad to be spared the sight of a girl whom she was conscious that she had injured, readily acquiesced in our mutual wishes. Blest with native sense and energy of soul, and sustained by confidence in her Creator, Mrs. Willoughby rose superior to that helpless dejection

which irremediable misfortunes so often produce in weak minds. The power of being useful to a fellow creature revived her spirits; she bestowed unremitting attention to my improvement; and finding that I had been neglected to such a degree that I scarcely knew how even to read, she asked Mrs. Smith if my guardians had desired that I should learn nothing. She replied, in evident confusion, that they had given orders that I should be taught every accomplishment which I shewed an inclination to acquire; but that I was of so obstinate a disposition it was impossible to make me attend to any thing. My dear preceptress said, that at her request she was sure that I would learn whatever she wished, and begged that I might be taught writing and French, and, in another year or two, geography and drawing. For music she found that I had no taste,

and therefore did not wish me to attempt it; she thought too that it enervated the mind, and took up too much of that time which ought to be devoted to more important objects. To my reading and work, to the culture of my head and heart she attended herself; and never was there a woman more capable of the office. She was truly a mother to me: I had never known any other friend; and all my affections were devoted to her with enthusiastic fondness. She feared that if I had the misfortune to lose her I must be left entirely to my own conduct, and probably friendless and unprotected, might have many misfortunes to encounter: she endeavoured, therefore, to endue my mind with fortitude; and she taught me to place my happiness in an unreproving conscience, and in the favour of the Almighty. As I grew older, I often wondered that the guardians of

whom I heard my governess speak, and who, I understood, paid for my board and education, should never come to see me. When I interrogated her upon the subject, she told me that it was enough for them to hear that I went on well, and was in good health, as they had a perfect reliance upon her care. I could hardly repress the indignation with which the recollection of that care inspired me: but for the kindness of my ever to be regretted Mrs. Willoughby what a lost creature had I been! On the day on which I completed my tenth year, Mrs. Smith called me into the parlour, and presented me with a letter. How my heart bounded when I read the direction, "To Miss Dudley." "There is then somebody besides my second mother," I thought, "who condescends to notice me." I eagerly tore it open; it was a blank, containing a bill of ten pounds.

Overcome with the disappointment of my sanguine expectations, I threw the letter upon the table, and turned to the window. "You see that your friends have not forgotten you," said my governess; "they now think you old enough to have some cash at your own disposal: you will receive that sum half yearly, out of which you are expected to find gloves and ribbons, with other little ornaments of dress, and all your working materials." "A thousand times rather," I returned, "would I see those who take this care for me, than receive their money." Mrs. Smith told me that I was an unreasonable creature, who was never satisfied; I had every thing that I ought to wish for, and if I was not contented it was my own fault. I saw that she was preparing to give me a long lecture, therefore put the note in my pocket, and sought consolation with my only

friend. With her my time glided on in a peaceful calm, uninterrupted, except by the periodical return of the blank letter and its contents; but these never failed to awaken sentiments of regret for the want of affection in the donor which they demonstrated. When I was fourteen, the note was increased to thirty pounds; and I was told that it was intended to supply all my wants. In vain I enquired concerning my future destiny; my governess professed an entire ignorance upon the subject.

Mrs. Willoughby had long ago penetrated into the character of this woman, specious as her conduct was towards those whom it was her interest to conciliate, and I was her only inducement for remaining in the family: but the pleasure which I afforded her, this partial friend said, was sufficient to compensate for every disadvantage. Except at the time I was taking my

lessons, and at meals, we never saw any of the other inhabitants of the mansion, but lived constantly in her apartment. There we alternately worked and read, my sweet monitress often laying down the book to enlighten my mind with her instructive comments; and there she instilled into my heart the purest doctrines of piety and morality."

I fear I am tedious, Miss Unwin, but I could dwell for ever upon this delightful period of my existence. "So passed our life, a clear united stream, by care unruffled," till I attained my sixteenth year. Alas! it is not on earth that permanent felicity is to be expected. At that time it pleased the Almighty Disposer of events to call to himself the sainted spirit of my beloved benefactress, and to try my resignation to his will by the loss of the only friend that I had ever possessed. When she first perceived her danger, she called me

to her, and telling me that as I did not know the source from whence I derived my support, it might perhaps one day fail me, she begged me to bring her a small parcel which I should find in her bureau: I did so; and putting it into my hand, which she pressed in her's, " In this packet, my dear Selina," said the angelic woman, " you will find notes to the amount of one hundred and twenty pounds; it is all that I have been able to save from the annuity in which I was obliged to sink my fortune at my husband's death. I have no relations to whom it is necessary, so lay it by, my love, against the time when such a sum may be useful. If I should be taken from you, my child," she continued, " let the thought that you have been the comfort of my declining days, console you for my loss; and let not your mind be enervated with grief: recollect that it is the duty of every one

to be useful to the extent of their abilities; and as your conduct will now be left, in a great measure, to your own direction, let it be such as may insure the approbation of your conscience. I have the pleasure to see that your judgment is matured beyond your years; and I trust that you will be able to go through, with honour, those trials that you will probably have to encounter when I am no more. Whatever may befal you, my beloved girl, do that which is right, and leave the disposal of events to that Being in whose hands they are."

Drowned in tears, I listened to almost the last words of my more than mother, and promised to shew my veneration for her memory, by the care with which I would obey her precepts. During her short illness I wearied Heaven with prayers for her recovery; and when she expired, methought my every

hope of happiness in this world died with her. Anxiety for my welfare was the only sensation that saddened the holy joy with which her soul obeyed the summons of her God: and she spent her latest breath in efforts to afford me consolation."

Here the fair narrator paused, to give vent to the emotions caused by the recollection of the scene which she had been describing; and Miss Unwin, highly interested for her, sincerely sympathized in her affliction. When Miss Dudley had a little recovered herself, she continued as follows. "Upon the death of my ever to be lamented friend, her next heir came to take possession of her small property, and to give orders for her funeral. I could not bear to see her apartment in the occupation of another, and therefore begged Mrs. Smith's permission to have it; but she told me coolly that she could not afford

to let me engross a room to myself. I replied that I would willingly pay her what she should think a reasonable compensation. I could very well do so, having never spent nearly half my income. She had the conscience to demand of me fifteen guineas a year, for the privilege of being unmolested: had she asked twenty she should have had it; though my soul revolted at her mercenary conduct. When time had a little blunted the poignancy of my grief, I delighted to pass my hours in the same routine of employments which had been marked out for me by my deceased benefactress. But I had soon a new source of vexation in the fulsome assiduities of Mrs. Smith's nephew, an impertinent low-lived fop, who was continually at the house. It is true that he had not much opportunity of tormenting me, for I never appeared in the parlour but at meals, and, to avoid him the

more, I seldom ate any supper; yet his effrontery was not to be repulsed by the disdain which it was impossible to avoid manifesting towards him: so far from it that, at length, I could not even take a walk in the garden, without his following me thither. He was sure that I should grow melancholy with being so much alone; he would shew himself my friend against my will, and endeavour to keep up my spirits. I told him haughtily, that if such were his intentions, he had totally mistaken the method; my own company was more agreeable to me than any which that house afforded. But finding that whether I reproved his boldness, or treated him with silent contempt, nothing effected the smallest alteration in his behaviour, I complained to Mrs. Smith of his intolerable insolence. She pretended great astonishment that I should be displeased with the attentions

of a young man who was a general favourite of the ladies: she should have thought that I might be glad of an opportunity of settling so well, as my situation there did not appear agreeable to me; and she could assure me that if I hoped to quit it by any other means, I should be disappointed. While I was single, my guardians intended that I should remain with her, as the properest asylum which I could have. Her nephew was an attorney, in good business; she knew that he was tenderly attached to me, and would be happy to make me his wife. My soul sickened within me at hearing that there was no prospect of release from my prison, but by means which my heart revolted against: for I had still cherished the hope, that, when my education was supposed to be completed, my guardians would compassionately take me from Elmwood. Knowing that it was in vain to argue with so

unfeeling a woman, I retired to my room; determined never to stir out of it but when necessity obliged me to seek for sustenance. Confinement injured my health, my spirits sunk under it; I could no longer find amusement in my usual avocations; and I seemed useless to the world and to myself. Books being my only relief, I sought by reading to divert my thoughts from my unfortunate situation. When Mrs. Willoughby was alive we used to be supplied from a circulating library in Town; but she had a complete set of the poets, and these I had purchased from her heir. Yet even this vegetative life I was not suffered to lead unmolested. One morning, as I was engaged with my favourite Thompson, I heard a knock at my room door; supposing it to be one of the maids, I arose and opened it: you will guess my astonishment when I found it to be Mr.

Williams. My cheeks glowed with indignation; and I told him that in my own apartment, at least, I had hoped to be unmolested. He seized my hand, telling me that he did not mean to offend me, but if he only spoke a word I was immediately upon the high ropes, and would not hear what he had to say. He was sure that he should not have intruded into my room, if he could have seen me alone any where else; and he had something of great importance to communicate. "Well, Sir," said I, sitting down, "let me now hear *all* that you have to impart, and let this be the last time of our meeting." He looked silly, and stammered out something of a wish to obtain my hand; and that I would suffer him to remove me from that house to one of my own. I replied, "that however disagreeable that house was to me, one of which he was master could not fail to be more so: he

must have long perceived how unpleasant to me his assiduities were, and I therefore could not but wonder that he should take the trouble of subjecting himself to a refusal." He tried, with the little eloquence of which he was master, to alter my determination; when finding me inflexible, he flew into a rage, and swearing revenge, proceeded to take liberties which I was not at all disposed to bear. Disengaging myself with an indignant effort, I rushed down stairs into the parlour; where finding Mrs. Smith, I related to her the insult that I had received: insisting upon her giving me a direction to my guardians, for I would no longer stay in a house where I was liable to such treatment. The wretch having followed me into the room, she reproved him for his behaviour, and assured me that it should no more be repeated; though she could not much wonder that

my unaccountable rejection should have put him out of patience. As to giving me my guardians' address it was quite out of the question; she being bound by a solemn promise not to let me know who they were. From this time it was my sole study to get out of the power of these vile confederates; for I had little doubt that they were united in a scheme to make me marry the contemptible Williams: and Heaven raised me up a friend, in the time of need, in the person of Walter Jones. He had been engaged as gardener about five years before. I was always a great favourite with this honest creature: Mrs. Willoughby and I used frequently to stop in our walks to chat with him; and after her death, he would often express his pity for me, and his concern to see me look so *unked*, as he called it. Having forborn my usual exercise, I had not seen him for a long time; but I now

determined to take the first opportunity of consulting him about the method of my escape; for I had little doubt that he would assist me. I did not consider myself under any obligation, in the present circumstances, to remain where my guardians had placed me, as they had deprived me of the means of seeking their protection; and I therefore thought myself at liberty to secure my safety by any expedient in my power. In relinquishing the income that I had received from them, I gave up the only mark of kindness which they had ever shewn me; and my doing so, I imagined, put a period at once to their right of controuling my conduct. But I was well assured that Mrs. Smith would scruple no method of detaining me, should she have the least suspicion of my intention; so it was necessary to proceed with caution. My plan was to prevail upon my humble friend to re-

commend me to some place, where there were honest people who would take me in; and I hoped that I could support myself by the application of those talents which I had been favoured with the opportunity of acquiring. As Walter was always at work long before Mrs. Smith was stirring, I got up early the next morning, and joined him in the garden. He was rejoiced to see me; which, he told me, he had almost despaired of doing again. I found him already informed of the circumstances of the preceding day, (which had been observed by the servants), and full of indignation against Mrs. Smith, and her nephew. He perfectly coincided in the urgency of the measure which I wished to adopt, and suggested a scheme for its execution. He told me of this place, and of your worthy family, which he spoke of in the highest terms; saying he was sure that, if I were pur-

sued, you would not suffer any violence to be offered to me. "Now, Miss," said he, "I mean to go to Heathdale again, as my sister is left a widow, and wants my help: so I have given Mrs. Smith warning, and can go to-night if you wish. I am thinking that my sister could take you in, if you could but afford to pay a small matter for your board: she would not want much, and you would be a comfort to her; if so be as you could put up with her homely ways." I was delighted with the idea of taking this honest creature with me; for sweet is the consolation of being accompanied by a person, however humble, of whose attachment we are convinced! How useful to me now was the sum which my kind friend had given me in her last illness! Together with what I had saved, it amounted to three hundred pounds. I mentioned it to Walter, and told him, that though the

interest would not be enough to support me, yet I thought that I could add to it by translating from the French:—but more of that hereafter. We then agreed that I should pack up what I could conveniently take, and bring it down into the garden at dusk; when we were to repair to a place nearly half a mile from Elmwood, where a coach to Chichester passed about nine o'clock; and from thence we could easily go in the stage to Midhurst. By this means we were in hopes of eluding every chance of discovery; as before that hour I always retired to my room for the night, and could not therefore be missed till the next morning. Having thus settled the manner of my escape, I returned to my apartment with a light heart to prepare for my departure. Oh, how much reason had I to be thankful that the time fixed was so near! If I had stayed another night!—but I

will restrain my indignation, and inform you of what followed. A closet belonging to my room, was divided only by a partition from one in Mrs. Smith's: I went into it, to take something out of a drawer, when I was stopped by the voice of Williams, mentioning my name. I listened involuntarily, and overheard the vilest scheme against my honour, suggested by Mrs. Smith to her nephew, for the accomplishment of their interested designs. The wretch muttered something about being called to an account; but was answered by his vile instigator, that when once I was his wife there would be no fear of a discovery, and the fortune would be his own: they then went out together. My blood ran cold, as I thought of the danger which I now hoped to escape; and I packed up my clothes with heartfelt gratitude to that Power who had defeated their wicked machinations.

When I saw them it was with difficulty that I could conceal my emotions. At length the time appointed arrived; when, locking my room door, I descended with a light step into the garden, where I found my honest assistant. We reached the coach undiscovered; which I had been very apprehensive that we should not have done, as Williams, for ought I knew, might have been concealed in my room, when I went into it for my parcels. There were fortunately two places vacant within the stage; for I was afraid of my good Walter riding on the outside, it being a moonlight night, lest he should meet with some person who knew him. Thus, almost a twelvemonth after the death of my valuable friend, I quitted a house, where, but for her, I should have known only misery. Delighted to escape from thence, I considered not the perils that I might encounter in the

world; but against which I now hope, that the friendship of your family, my dear Miss Unwin, will be my protection. With what has passed since my arrival here, you are doubtless already acquainted."

Here Miss Dudley ended the history of her life, and Louisa expressed her gratitude for the confidence reposed in her in the most lively terms. "How I rejoice in your escape!" said she; "and how truly happy I am that fortune has fixed your residence at Heathdale! Should any unforeseen events sink my prospects in life, I fear that I should not bear adversity with your firmness." "You rate my merit too highly," replied Selina; "but whatever I possess of good, I owe it all to the precepts of my beloved Mrs. Willoughby. There is, surely, no great fortitude required in supporting a change in outward circumstances,

which adds so considerably to my inward happiness: for in the charms of your friendship, and in the pursuits of industry, I shall know more real peace than is in the power of wealth and idleness to bestow." Louisa now recollected her brother's request, and imparted it to Miss Dudley: who gave her free liberty to communicate what she had heard to her own family, but wished it to go no further, lest Williams should discover the place of her retreat. "You mentioned an intention of translating from the French," said Miss Unwin, after a pause; "I suppose that you are a perfect mistress of that language." "I ought to be at least," returned Miss Dudley, "from the instructions which I have received: and if I can but obtain employment from the booksellers, I shall, with ease to myself, acquire an income fully equal to my wishes. I judge according to

the information given me by my French master; and only fear that this line is already overstocked." Louisa having promised that her brother should request a friend in Town to make enquiries upon the subject, Miss Dudley, after thanking her for the kindness, said that if that scheme should fail, could ensure herself enough for subsistence, by making lace; as Mrs. Willoughby, having lived before her marriage in the midland counties, was an adept in the art. Filled with increased sentiments of admiration and affection for her new-found friend, Miss Unwin, after having spent with her a long evening, returned home; and entered just as the family were going to supper. Frederic's eyes sparkled with pleasure; but, feeling himself too much interested to trust his tongue to make enquiries, he was silent. "Well, Louisa," cried Mr. Unwin, "have

you found Miss Dudley worthy of our notice?" "She is every thing, my dear father, that you could yourself wish in one who is inclined to honour me with her friendship," answered Miss Unwin. "Then may I not fairly presume," returned her father, "that she has not enjoined you to keep her story secret from your family?" "She will have no concealments," replied Miss Unwin, "towards those whose esteem she wishes to acquire; but she would not have it made public, for reasons of which you will allow the force, when you hear her narrative: after supper I will give it you to the best of my remembrance." Never did a meal appear so tedious to Frederic: he felt quite out of patience with his father and brother for seeming hungry; and for not being equally eager with himself to hear every thing relative to Miss Dudley. At length the servant

withdrew, and Louisa performed her promise. Wrapt in attention, Frederic was all ear. He almost adored Mrs. Willoughby; was full of resentment against Mrs. Smith, and Williams; and the interesting Selina every moment rose in his estimation. "What an admirable girl!" he exclaimed, when his sister had concluded: "how much to her honour is her conduct explained!" "There are few, indeed, who at her age possess such strength of mind," said William; "but let us not judge too hastily: she has not yet endured the greatest trial which a mortal can experience, that of the emotions of her heart militating against her duty." He spoke feelingly: his sister looked at him with surprise. "May none of you ever know that temptation, my children!" cried Mr. Unwin: "to guard against it let reason keep the key of your incli-

nations; for, believe me, where that is not the case, permanent happiness is never likely to ensue." William sighed. Louisa now taking up her candle, for it was much later than was usual with them, significantly wished Frederic pleasant dreams; and they all retired to bed: but not all to rest. Frederic's thoughts were too intent upon Miss Dudley to suffer him to sleep; and his brother had a secret source of uneasiness, which had that day been considerably augmented

CHAP. IV.

—" For ought that ever I could read,
" Could ever hear by tale or history,
" The course of true love never did run smooth
" But either it was different in blood—
" Or else misgrafted in respect of years—
" Or else it stood upon the choice of friends"—

SHAKSPEARE.

WILLIAM UNWIN loved Miss Neville, with a flame as delicate as it was hopeless! But though he had in vain endeavoured to conquer a passion, which had taken too deep a root to be easily eradicated, yet he had sufficient fortitude to conceal it. Edward Dorian was his most intimate friend: often

did he lament his scepticism, and grieve that so excellent a character, in other respects, should have such a glaring defect; yet he still flattered himself, that time, united with his good sense, might shew him his error. Till William had been made by Edward the confidant of his affection for Emma, he had never suspected his own; but the sudden pang which shot through his heart at the intelligence, convinced him of the fatal truth, at the same time, that he saw there was no prospect of success. He would not have supplanted his friend, even had there been a chance of his gaining Emma; but, independently of that, he could not, as a Protestant clergyman, think of marrying a Roman Catholic. Thus, deprived of hope himself, he placed his happiness in the happiness of her whom he loved; and finding Emma's attachment equal to his friend's, there was nothing that he

so ardently wished as Mrs. Neville's consent to their union.

That afternoon, Edward had been with him; to pour forth in his sympathizing bosom the grief with which he was overwhelmed, and to ask his advice respecting a private marriage. "I must not," said William, "counsel disobedience to parents! Though they certainly cannot be justified in forcing their children to give their hands where their affections cannot be bestowed, yet surely they have, equally with them, a negative right: and, I should think, natural affection would, in general, prevent its being exercised harshly. I trust, my dear Edward, that when Mrs. Neville sees that her daughter's peace depends upon her consent, she will not withhold it." Edward argued for the inherent claim that every one had to seek for happiness by every means in their power; and, notwithstanding his

friend's opinion, still continued in his first resolution. He left William to watch for an opportunity of seeing Emma; but that day he waited in vain: the next, he was equally unsuccessful; when, his patience being exhausted, he determined to write, and get his letter conveyed by Agnes.

Miss Neville, in the mean time, was involved in the greatest affliction. Mrs. Neville had won the confession of her daughter's attachment, and, urged by Father Celestin, spared no arguments to convince her, that nothing but misery could be the result of her union with a heretic. For a long time, Emma answered only by her tears; till love, at length, conquering her natural timidity, she appealed, in the most moving terms, to her mother's affection; begging to be spared the anguish of separation from the only man whom she could ever value. "Give me not to

another, my dearest mother!" she exclaimed; "let me but see him! suffer me to hear the music of his voice, and I shall be happy to the extent of my wishes! Surely I can derive no hurt from the company of my Edward! Is not his character estimable? Is not his conduct truly virtuous? You have never yet denied me any thing. Oh, let not this petition, on which all my future felicity depends, be the first to meet a refusal!" Exhausted by the violence of her emotions, Emma sunk into momentary insensibility. Mrs. Neville was almost distracted; she cried that she had murdered her daughter, and called aloud for assistance. Agnes and Father Celestin entered: she related to him the scene which had passed, and begged that she might be allowed to save her child's life, by granting the request, on which she was sure that it depended. "Your fears, Madam,"

replied he, "carry you too far; and you are blind to the consequences which would follow such a proceeding. Do you suppose, if you admitted of Mr. Dorian's visits, that the affair would stop there? No, your daughter would be inevitably lost; and you ought rather to follow her to the grave than to see her the wife of a heretic! But you have only to continue firm, and she will yield the obedience which is due to a parent." When Emma had recovered her senses, the priest set before her, in such a strong light, the horrors of eternal reprobation, which she would incur by pursuing the dictates of her sinful passion, that the terrified girl promised that she would endeavour to think of Edward no more. But she had engaged for more than was in her power to perform; and the conflict of her mind brought on a fever, which confined her three days to her bed. During

this time, Miss Unwin frequently came to see her, but never without encountering the frowns of Father Celestin, who feared that she would incite her friend to escape the galling yoke with which he wished to shackle her understanding. Youth and a good constitution suspended the ravages of love; and when Emma was in a convalescent state, her mother, wearied with watching, left her to the care of Agnes. The loquacious girl no sooner found herself alone with her young mistress than she began talking of Edward, whom she declared she pitied, though he was a heretic, and could have no chance of being saved. After a long, and rather incomprehensible account of the misery to which he was reduced, she ended by giving Miss Neville a letter, which nothing, she said, but the fear of killing the poor young man by a refusal, could have induced her to bring. Emma re-

cognised the hand-writing of her lover with a sigh: her first impulse was to shew it to her mother; but the more she viewed it, the more her resolution wavered. Then she thought to send it back unopened; but she could not bear the idea of the pain which this proceeding would give him. "What will he think of me?" said she to herself: "I, who have so often vowed him an eternal constancy! Surely the least that I can do, is to answer his letter; tell him of the promise which they have extorted from me; and, as I can no longer live for him, conjure him to forget my existence." She shed a flood of tears at the thought, and the following tender lines were not calculated to lessen her emotion.

"You are ill, my beloved Emma, and I am not with you! The affliction that you have suffered on my account, has given rise to your disorder, and I

am not by to mitigate it! Vain would be the attempt to express, by words, the anguish which this occasions me! But, my dearest girl, can duty require that you should yield obedience to the commands of an unfeeling priest? I know that your mother's heart is for us; it is the fear of his stern and arbitrary authority alone which prevents her from receiving me as usual: yet, as there is no chance of his losing his influence over her mind, we can have no hope of her revoking her prohibition. But is it possible, my Emma, that we should endure this separation and live? Shall two persons be rendered miserable at the will of one? Reason abhors such a sacrifice. Fly to me, then, my gentle girl! Consent to be mine; and my future life shall be devoted to your happiness. Believe me, when the ceremony has taken place, and cannot be recalled, your mother will receive you

with open arms: and, however she may preserve appearances to the world, her heart will rejoice in her daughter's prospect of felicity. Why should there be objections of religion? Though I am not myself of the Romish church, yet I will never attempt to seduce you from the faith in which you were educated; and you will not, I am sure, think the less favourably of me for not professing a belief contrary to my principles. We will not argue upon matters of opinion, and I trust that we shall never have a divided sentiment with regard to our moral conduct. Recollect what a poet of your own persuasion has written.

> "For modes of faith, let senseless zealots fight;
> "His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right."

If, then, my dearest love, you had ever any regard for your faithful Edward; if the vows of constancy that

you have so often made, were sincere; and if you wish not to drive me to despair; you will not refuse my ardent request: you will write me a few lines of comfort, and fix the time when you will be mine by the most irrevocable engagements. In Town, we shall find no difficulty in being united; both by a minister of your church and that of England. It is in the hope only of your consent that I drag on existence! Oh, how my soul longs for the time when I shall subscribe myself, your devoted, and happy husband, Edward Dorian."

When Emma had perused the letter, she sat some time with it in her hand, unconscious of what she did, and stupified with grief: till she was roused by Agnes' begging that she would write an answer while she had an opportunity. "Oh, would to God," replied Emma, "that I had received

this, before that fatal promise passed my lips!"

"Tortured by a thousand conflicting sensations, the unhappy girl knew not on what to resolve. On one side, her imagination painted the agony of Edward on receiving her refusal, and the felicity which, she could not help thinking, would be her portion, were she his wife: and on the other, the denunciations of Father Celestin, rose before her eyes in accumulated horror. Her mind, weakened by illness, was unequal to the power of intense thinking: she fell into a state of torpor, and sat with her eyes fixed upon the ground, insensible of the endeavours of Agnes to attract her attention. Mrs. Neville, called to her daughter's assistance, was greatly alarmed at the change which had taken place; and immediately summoned the physician. He said that the present symptoms proceeded merely from lan-

guor; and, as her illness seemed to be the effect of uneasiness, a suspension of the power of reflection might accelerate her restoration to health. He ordered that she should be kept perfectly quiet, and not be suffered to see any body who might particularly interest her: for the worthy man knew, (in common with the whole village, by the loquacity of Agnes), what had happened in Mrs. Neville's family. Edward Dorian was acquainted, by the officious girl, with the consequences which his letter had produced, and was almost distracted at the intelligence; condemning his own impatience, which had prevented him from waiting her more perfect recovery. The physician, however, was right in his prediction: Emma daily recruited her strength, and with it the powers of her mind returned. When she was able to quit her chamber, she determined to relieve Ed-

ward from a state of suspense which, she thought, must be more intolerable than even a knowledge of the truth: and she fancied, that when she had performed this task, she should be more able to reconcile herself to the severity of her fate. It was not without the greatest effort, and blotting the paper with many tears, that she wrote the following lines, which she sent by Agnes.

"How painful the sensations are which now agitate my mind, it is impossible for me to describe! Did it depend upon myself only, never should my pen convey affliction to my beloved Edward! How severe the struggle has been, my illness, from which I am scarcely yet recovered, is a sufficient proof. What a sacrifice does religion demand of me! And, oh, my God! is it possible that I have consented to make it! Yes, Edward, that priest, to whom the doctrines of our church re-

quire that I should yield obedience, had, before your letter reached me, received my promise, a fatal promise! to think of you no more. My mother too,—Oh, Edward, you deceive yourself! My mother would never consent to my union with a heretic. She is convinced that my faith would be in danger: and is it not too certain that, if I were once your wife, the love I bear you would induce me to adopt all your sentiments? Yet, were myself alone concerned, for your sake I would incur every risk; and surely to share the same fate with you, must be happiness; but I dare not resist the authority of Father Celestin, and the entreaties of my mother. Blame me not; but rather pity the anguish with which I beg you to see me no more! You must not write,—I cannot answer your letters?---Do not afflict me by obliging me to refuse them! To hear that you bear our separation with

calmness, would be balm to my wounded mind. That you may speedily recover your tranquillity, is the most earnest prayer of the unfortunate Emma."

Vain were the unhappy girl's entreaties, that Edward would exert that fortitude which he too plainly saw that she possessed not herself: he abandoned himself to all the agonies of despair, and a dangerous illness, in consequence, confined him for many months. Mrs. Neville, by Father Celestin's advice, sent Emma to a relation at Bath; as well for the re-establishment of her health, as that she might be out of the way of Edward: hoping that change of scene would drive from her thoughts every afflictive remembrance.

CHAP. V.

" Hypocrisy, detest her as we may,
" (And no man's hatred ever wrong'd her yet)
" May claim this merit still, that she admits
" The worth of what she mimics with such care,
" And thus gives virtue indirect applause."

COWPER.

" These are the charming agonies of love,
" Whose misery delights. But through the heart
" Should jealousy its venom once diffuse,
" 'Tis then delightful misery no more."

THOMPSON.

WE will now go back to Miss Dudley; who, in the society of Mr. Unwin's family, enjoyed more happiness than she had known since the death of

her valued friend, Mrs. Willoughby. Her spirits, naturally good, returned; and she felt that lightness of heart, which health, laudable employment, and an exemption from affliction are calculated to produce in a young mind. Her small fortune, through the medium of a friend of Mr. Unwin, had been placed in private hands, where the security was esteemed undoubtedly good, for the advantage of larger interest than could be obtained at the bank. The negociation with the bookseller had been unsuccessful, from the very cause which had made her fear its failure: she had therefore furnished herself with a lace-pillow, at which she worked for a stated number of hours in the day; to the great astonishment of Mrs. Dobson and her neighbours, to whom the manufacture was entirely new. Having learned the art when young, Miss Dudley made

lace quick and well, for which she found a ready sale at Midhurst. Beside this employment, as she rose early, and regulated her time methodically, she found leisure both to assist Mrs. Dobson, and to keep up the practice of her elegant acquirements. Her days were thus devoted to industry and domestic duties, but her evenings were sacred to the pleasures of friendship and innocent recreation: they were frequently spent at the parsonage. Her story had been confirmed to the Unwins by their old servant Walter; with whom, or Mrs. Dobson, they could not converse without hearing her praise: William sincerely esteemed her character, regarding her as a sister; and his father delighted in her company. Sometimes Louisa would take her work to the farm; Frederic read to the ladies; and unheeded flew the hours which he could contrive to spend

with Selina. At one time he would carry her a message from his sister, at another he had a new publication to offer for her perusal, and frequently he would petition to accompany her in her walks. Miss Dudley thought him a most amiable young man, and could not be insensible to the pleasure which his society afforded; till, at length, she became so accustomed to it, that something seemed wanting to her enjoyment when a day passed without bringing him to the farm.

But Selina had another visitor, whose company, though she could not avoid him, was, at first, disagreeable: this visitor was Montague Dorian. It was true she perceived no impropriety in his behaviour, but the character that she had heard of him rendered her distrustful. From the time that Montague first saw Miss Dudley at Mrs. Dobson's, he had marked her for his

own; as her unprotected situation seemed to promise him little difficulty in accomplishing his designs: but as he became more acquainted with her, his certainty of success vanished. The dignity of her manners awed him, and he saw that it was necessary to proceed with wariness and circumspection. When Selina first settled at the farm, he had called several times, but, from some reason or other, he was never fortunate enough to find her at home: and, suspecting that she was purposely denied, he one Sunday contrived to join her as she walked from church. "I have long been anxious," he said, "to pay my respects to you; and must be allowed this morning to make myself amends for the frequent disappointments which I have suffered. Among the numbers who, I doubt not, are anxious for your acquaintance, believe me there are none to whom it will

afford more sincere pleasure." Miss Dudley replied, coolly, that he did her honour; but that the necessary avocations to which her time was devoted, would not admit of her receiving many visitors. "That is as much as to say, in other words, that you do not wish to see me," returned Montague; "but what have I done to deserve this cruelty? Have I not a right to suppose that you have been prejudiced against me: and is it consistent with your good sense to listen to unsupported accusations? Of what nature they may be I am ignorant; few people are without enemies; but I am well assured that there is no person whom I would less willingly offend, and it is but common justice to favour me with a trial. Surely, when I call upon Mrs. Dobson, which I often do, there could be no impropriety in your being present: if you find me abuse your goodness, it will

then be time enough to retract, and I give you my word to be obedient to your commands." Thus pressed, Selina could not help saying, that she had no reason to entertain an ill opinion of Mr. Dorian. They just then reached the house; and he replied, that the only proof which she could give of her assertion was not to refuse his visits. She answered by begging him to walk in, and she would endeavour to do the honours of her parlour, in which Mrs. Dobson always sat with her on a Sunday. He admired the arrangement of the furniture, complimented her on her taste for drawing, in which he was himself a proficient; and behaved with so much respect, exerting his powers of entertainment so successfully, that Selina could hardly help thinking that his character had been misrepresented; though she still determined to be upon her guard. It

is, indeed, too frequently the case, that polished manners are so complete a cloak for vice, that it is scarcely possible for youth and inexperience to see through the disguise.

For some time, as Miss Dudley's reserve to him was by degrees relaxed, Montague flattered himself that he made some progress in her favour ; but, at length, he could not avoid perceiving the bar which Frederic was likely to prove to his wishes. He saw, with vexation, that he could have no hope of engaging her affections, while his rival was continually in the way to counteract his designs; yet he consoled himself with the thought that he would not always be at Heathdale. He knew that his father was seeking a situation for him; and he resolved to persuade Mr. Raynsford, whose favourite he was, to exert himself to procure him a partnership in some respectable house in

town: by so doing he knew that he should oblige Mr. Unwin, whose good opinion he foresaw that it would be his interest to conciliate, and also further his own schemes.

Frederic, meanwhile, thought not of the future in the enjoyment of the present. Miss Dudley rose each day in his estimation; her virtues and accomplishments; her kindness and attention to his good old nurse, (who was now growing infirm,) were sterling attractions; the effect of which, no frequency of contemplating them, no succession of time could diminish: the more he revolved them in his mind, the more he thought it impossible for any man to be worthy of her, and the more he roused all his exertions to render himself estimable in her eyes. Sometimes when she received him with smiles of pleasure, after a longer absence than usual, he would flatter himself that he had

gained some interest in her heart; and again, the timidity of true affection, which prompts us to magnify the value of its object, and to lessen our own, made him fear that it was too great a happiness for him to enjoy. But though these doubts would now and then occur to damp his felicity, he yet had not felt the torment of jealousy; the anguish of suspecting that another had any chance of gaining that favour, of which he would have given worlds to be assured. He had once met Montague Dorian at Miss Dudley's, but he supposed that his visit was merely casual; for Montague generally went when he knew that Frederic was engaged elsewhere. Mr. Dorian had offered to teach Selina a new method of drawing; and she was one day engaged with her pencil, while he was leaning over her, with his hand resting upon the back of her chair, giving her

directions, when Frederic unexpectedly entered the room. The blush of surprise and pleasure mantled in Miss Dudley's cheeks at his approach. Conscious that she regarded Mr. Dorian only as an acquaintance, whose talents made him agreeable, and ignorant of the world, she had not the least idea that there could be any impropriety in receiving his instructions. Frederic, as he came in, observed Montague hastily withdraw his hand from Selina's chair; he imputed her augmented colour to confusion at his unwelcome interruption, and he experienced, for the first time, the corroding pangs of jealousy. He scarcely returned Mr. Dorian's salutation; and replying to Selina's enquiries after his health, that he had got a head-ache, sat down in the window. "I never heard you complain of that disorder before," said Miss Dudley; "how came you to pick

up such an unpleasant companion?" "It is not always in one's power to choose one's company," returned Frederic, sullenly. "Mr. Unwin," observed Montague, "has probably come to the farm in hopes that change of air would remove his complaint." "You are mistaken, sir," replied Frederic, "for I had it not when I came from home." Selina looked at him with surprise and concern. "You have walked too fast in the wind," said she: "I am sure you are very unwell: will you take any thing?" He told her no; it was no matter; it would soon pass over; he was a fool to mind it. She thought that he must have met with something in his way to ruffle him; and, unwilling to trouble him with questions which seemed only to increase his irritation, she asked him to look at her drawing, saying that it was a first at[illegible]pt in a method which Mr.

Dorian had taught her, and she wished to know whether it met with his approbation." "My approbation!" he repeated to himself, as he rose to view it; "of what consequence is my approbation! Is not Dorian's sufficient?" After having examined it for some time, he remarked that nothing which came out of Miss Dudley's hands could be ill done, but he could not say that he admired the style. "Do you not," returned Montague; "it is, however, a style very much in fashion. But I should rather think that, instead of the head-ache, you have got the spleen, which prompts you to view every thing upon the darkest side.

"All seems infected, which th' infected spy,
"As all looks yellow to the jaundiced eye."

"The spleen," repeated Frederic; "there are people enough in the world

whose self-sufficiency is calculated to give it: it would not be wonderful if I had met with some of them." Montague could not be ignorant to whom he alluded, but as it did not suit his designs to quarrel with him at that time, he turned to Miss Dudley, and said, "Your friend, Frederic, is quite cynical to day; I am afraid, if I stay much longer in his company, that he will put me out of conceit with myself, a misfortune I would not willingly incur; I shall therefore wish you a good morning." "I beg that you may not be hurried away by any such fear," cried Frederic; "believe me, it is entirely groundless." Montague returned him no other answer, than wishing him a speedy recovery from his complaint, and, bowing to Miss Dudley, withdrew.

When he was gone, Selina asked Frederic what could induce him to

behave so oddly to Mr. Dorian? "Had he been as ready to take offence as you were to give it," continued she, "there would inevitably have been a quarrel; and you ought to have considered how extremely disagreeable that must have been to me." "I ought indeed to have known," replied he, "that in offending Mr. Dorian I offended you; but I will be careful not to repeat my crime: till to day I knew not how much you were interested about him." "Even to day has not brought me the same information," returned Selina, smiling, who now first perceived the origin of the head-ache and all its attendant evils: "I look upon Mr. Dorian in no other light than as a common acquaintance; but certainly a dispute between two gentlemen in my apartment is not a thing that I should particularly desire." "Then it was not upon his account that you were

alarmed?" said Frederic, eagerly. "Why I can't say that I experienced very acute terror," she replied; "but had there been cause for any, certainly you, to whose family I am under so many obligations, would have had a greater share in it than Montague Dorian." Frederic's heart dilated with rapture: he pressed Miss Dudley's hand to his lips, and exclaimed, with the utmost emotion, "Then you do not hate me!" "Why not absolutely," answered Selina, withdrawing her hand with an air of surprise: "your mind seems to be possessed with odd fancies this morning; have you ever given me any reason to do so?" "God forbid!" said the delighted Frederic; and, from the impulse of the moment, regardless of all future obstacles, he would certainly have declared his passion, and solicited a return, if the recollection of Montague's sudden change of posture upon

his entrance had not raised doubts in his mind, which he could not altogether reconcile to Miss Dudley's declarations: dropping her hand, which he had again taken, he cried, "Yet surely there was no necessity, if Mr. Dorian was teaching you a new style of drawing, that he should have rested his hand upon the back of your chair, and leant over you in such an attitude."

Miss Dudley's colour rose at this speech: for the first time she felt offended with him, and replied, coldly, "You have undoubtedly a right to put what construction you please upon a very accidental occurrence; and if my word is not to be taken with regard to my sentiments of Mr. Dorian, to a person who disbelieves it, I shall not take the trouble to justify my conduct." Frederic saw how much he had displeased her, and severely repented having suffered his jealousy to carry

him such unwarrantable lengths; he endeavoured to apologize; but the reserve of Selina's manners, so different from what he was accustomed to, tied his tongue. While he was meditating how to atone for his offence, Selina arose, and pleading the indispensable engagements which devolved upon her from Mrs. Dobson's infirmities, wished him a good morning.

Frederic's visit to Miss Dudley gave rise to a new train of reflections in her mind; for she had never before examined into the nature of her sentiments concerning him; but she could not conceal from herself the pleasure which she had felt from the discovery of his affection. She knew that she was a favourite with his family, and had no reason to suppose that, when it was prudent for him to marry, Mr. Unwin would object to his choice of her for a wife: yet the trait of jealousy which

she had that day seen in his disposition, alarmed her; and she was seriously offended by his suspicions of her veracity. Considering also that it would be inimical to his interest to make any engagement with so unconnected a being as herself, till he were well established in the world, she determined to be more distant in her behaviour; and to avoid, as much as possible, all occasions of being with him alone. At the same time, she resolved to keep a strict watch upon his temper and disposition; points on which, she truly thought, domestic happiness so materially depended.

Frederic, detesting himself for his hastiness and injustice, had taken his solitary walk homewards, when he was met by his brother, who was going to pay his usual attendance in the sick-room of his friend. William Unwin had sincerely sympathized in the melancholy fate of the unfortunate Ed-

ward and Emma. To have seen her happy, though with another, would have consoled him for every evil which could have befallen himself; but the misfortunes of her whom he loved, were almost more than he could support: and it required the utmost exertion of fortitude, united with his habitual reliance on Providence, to enable him to bear up under the weight of affliction, and to give that consolation to his friend which he was so much in need of himself. "You are going to see Edward?" said Frederic; "take him my best wishes for his recovery." "I will," replied William, "you are not mistaken in my destination; nor am I, I think, in supposing that you are come from the farm. Ah, brother! I fear that your frequent visits there will place your heart in a dangerous situation." "And were it so," returned Frederic, "no one could raise any objection to

Miss Dudley's character: but, believe me, William, I think her as much above my deserts, as I am unlikely to gain the smallest interest in her affections." "Your modesty does not prove you to be wholly free," rejoined William. "No one has a greater esteem for Miss Dudley than I have; yet I must confess that I do not wish to see you entangled in a love affair at present. In all probability you will not be able to settle for many years, especially with a woman who has no fortune; and it is not desirable for a young man, just setting out in life, to have any object likely to engage his thoughts in opposition to his necessary employments." "How coolly you argue," said Frederic; "with all the philosophy and gravity of threescore: but I tell you again, that if I were ever so much inclined to be imprudent, there is little fear that Miss Dudley would put it in my power."

Then adding, that he would not detain him from his visit, he turned from him, and William pursued his way to the manor-house.

Upon Frederic's arrival at home, Louisa could not but observe that something had occurred to give him uneasiness. He was her favourite brother; and they had seldom had a thought concealed from each other; for though she loved and esteemed William, there was a reserve in his manner which checked her confidence. "What is the matter, Frederic?" said she, sitting down by him; "are you unwell, or unhappy?" "I have been behaving like a fool," replied he; "and have displeased your friend, Selina." "Oh, is that all?" returned Louisa; "come, don't look so deplorable; I'll engage to make your peace. What misdemeanor have you been committing? she has no lap-dog whose paw you might

have trod upon, or bird that could have made its escape by your carelessness." "I wish my crime had not been of a more serious nature," said Frederic; "but I took it into my head to be uneasy at finding young Dorian with her, giving her instructions in drawing; and justly offended her by my rude and unauthorized suspicions." "Jealous of Montague!" cried his sister; "do you suppose that a man of his turn of mind is likely to suit the taste of Selina Dudley? But I have heard, my good brother, that this same yellow disease is one of the attendants upon *love;* how you have betrayed yourself! Well, did I not prophesy this long ago? but, like Cassandra of old, my predictions were only laughed at." "This may be sport to you," replied Frederic, gravely; "but to me it is quite otherwise. The man must be a stoic who could be acquainted with Miss Dudley, and re-

main insensible; like my brother William, for instance, who has been giving me a lecture upon prudence, totally unnecessary; for I have sinned beyond forgiveness." Miss Unwin wondered what objection William could make to Selina, declaring that she did not know so perfect a character. "How few," continued she, "educated like her, could submit to work as she does, in order to lighten the labour of poor old nurse; and how few would have exerted themselves even to gain the necessary knowledge!" "It was not to Selina that he objected," answered her brother, "but to the possibility of my marrying for many years, without a fortune." Louisa agreed to the truth of this remark, and observed to Frederic, that as he could not long remain at Heathdale, it would perhaps be better not to form an indefinite engagement. Frederic impatiently asked, what assur-

ance he could have, if he quitted her without declaring his attachment, that Montague Dorian, or some other man, would not secure her hand in his absence? "Do you suppose Selina so blind, that, from what has passed today, she has not divined your love?" replied his sister; "and do you imagine her to be of so unstable a nature, that, if her heart be interested for you, absence alone will render her inconstant; or that she will be induced, by interest, to unite herself with a man to whom she is indifferent? Believe me, your fears make you unjust to her merits." Frederic anxiously asked Louisa if she thought that Selina's inclinations were in his favour. And his sister hinted that she did not believe her friend would be inexorable; but, at the same time, was of opinion, that her prudence would prevent her from giving him encouragement at present. "I have pro-

mised," continued she, "to take my work, and drink tea with her this afternoon; and if you chuse to accompany me, I will endeavour to make your peace." Frederic returned a thousand thanks; and, delighted with the hope that Louisa had inspired, met his father and brother in excellent spirits. He thought that the hours crept slowly along till they set out for the farm; though, on his way thither, a lover's fears suggested that Miss Dudley might receive him with the same coldness which she had shewn in the morning. As they entered the room, Louisa took her brother by the hand, saying, that she had brought a culprit whose pardon she had promised to obtain. "I assure you," added she, "that he would not have ventured into your awful presence without my protection: tell me, have I presumed too far upon my interest? If penitence be a sufficient plea

for forgiveness, I give you my word that he deserves it." "To such a petitioner I can refuse nothing," replied Miss Dudley: "and if your brother will engage not to repeat his fault, I will forget his unjust suspicions." "And is it only to my sister's intercession that I owe your clemency?" said Frederic, in a low voice, as he took the hand which was held out in token of reconciliation. "Nay, now you are unreasonable," returned she, gravely: "have you deserved it on your own account?" He would have answered; but Miss Dudley, not willing to give him an opportunity, busied herself in preparations for tea. When it was over, as the evening was fine, a walk was proposed by Selina, to which her visitors consenting, they strolled into Cowdry Park. "What a pity," said Louisa, "that this once magnificent seat of the Montagues should now be a pile of ruins!"

"I have understood," observed Miss Dudley, "that Cowdry House, and the possesser of that ancient title, were destroyed nearly at the same time." Frederic replied, that Lord Montague was lost at the falls of the Rhine in Switzerland; and that the accident happened before the information could reach him of the seat of his ancestors having been consumed by fire. "It is, however, a beautiful and picturesque object in its present state," said Selina; "I think I have heard that some parts of the chapel are still remaining." Louisa believed so, and observed that the family were Roman Catholics. "Talking of Roman Catholics puts me in mind of Father Celestin," resumed Miss Dudley: "Do you know, the zealous priest has been endeavouring to bring me within the confined pale of that bigoted church, which excludes all other persuasions from every chance of

salvation; and this illiberal doctrine he made use of as an argument in favour of his opinions. He told me that, if his religion was the true one, there could be no possibility of my being saved out of it; whereas the Protestants allowed, that men of all the Christian sects, who acted up to their profession, were entitled to the promises of the Gospel. Thus, by acknowledging the authority of the Pope, I must be, at least, on the safest side. I answered, that though it was true that our church did not exclude any set of people from salvation who lived according to their principles, yet that, by turning Papist, I should certainly act in opposition to mine; therefore his argument was of no avail."

"So he did not succeed in his pious design of taking your conscience under his own direction?" said Frederic.

"Why, no," replied Selina; "though he assured me that it was an advantage

which I should one day repent having forfeited by my obstinacy. Had my being of one communion rather than of another, been merely the effect of chance, or his the first reasons which I had heard given for any particular persuasion, I might perhaps have been brought over to his opinion; but my faith was founded upon conviction, after having been directed by Mrs. Willoughby to a serious examination of its principles; and the intolerance of the church of Rome is, I think, a greater objection to that, than I can form to any other sect of Christianity." "I cannot bear Father Celestin," cried Louisa; "and almost hate all Catholics for his sake. Had it not been for him, my gentle friend might have been happy; poor Edward would have been spared his present distress; and William what he has suffered from the sympathy of friendship." "Now you are

unjust, Louisa," observed Miss Dudley; "we ought not to let our private feelings prejudice us against any particular description of people. I doubt not that there are very many estimable characters among the Roman Catholics; though I should not chuse to be one myself. I cannot say I admire Father Celestin; he possesses, in a great degree, the principal defect of their priesthood, pride founded upon a belief of infallibility: he knows not how to argue with temper; and I fancy that I have made him my irreconcileable enemy, by daring to think for myself. I must ever condemn intolerance and bigotry, as being the very opposites of those distinguishing characteristics of the Gospel, charity and humility; but I must hope that all Catholics are not like him."

Louisa owned that she was wrong; said that her conduct was not always

in conformity with her principles; but that she would try to profit by her friend's example. They were now upon the borders of Whetter's wood; Frederic proposed entering it; and they rambled among the retired walks of that beautiful plantation, till the lateness of the hour warned them to return home. From that time, whenever Frederic called at the farm, unaccompanied by his sister, Selina always contrived to be out of the way, or busily assisting Mrs. Dobson in domestic affairs. He could not but acknowledge the prudence of the precaution; yet he wished that her affection for him had superseded it; and often complained to his sister of her friend's coldness. "Did I not tell you that this would be the case," said Louisa: "whatever her sentiments may be, she has learned the art of self-command, and will not suffer her inclinations to interfere with her

duty. You have every reason to be satisfied, for you ought to think more highly of her, as I do, for her estimable conduct. Poor nurse is almost disabled, by the rheumatism, for active employment; and Selina seems sent to her as a blessing from heaven." Frederic sighed, reluctantly owning the truth of his sister's observations.

CHAP VI.

"Unutterable happiness! which Love
"Alone bestows, and on a favoured few.—
"But absent, what fantastic woes arous'd
"Rage in each thought by restless musing fed."

THOMPSON.

It was now five months since Miss Dudley took up her residence at Heathdale; when Mr. Unwin, calling Frederic into his study one evening, told him that Mr. Raynsford had procured him a situation as junior partner in one of the most respectable houses in London: adding, that he must go to town

in two or three days at furthest. "I shall be sorry to lose you, my son," said the good man; "but it is for your interest; and I trust the separation will be but temporary, for you will sometimes be able to visit your friends in the country."

Frederic was thunderstruck at this intelligence: though he knew it was a thing which must one day happen, yet he had flattered himself that the time was yet at a distance; or rather he had endeavoured to banish from his thoughts every recollection which might give him uneasiness. As soon as his conference with his father was ended, he flew to the farm, and enquired for Miss Dudley. "I must see her," said he to old Walter, who came to the door; "tell her that I have business of the utmost importance to communicate." Selina was at work in her little parlour, amusing herself with repeating the beautiful

description of domestic happiness at the end of Thompson's Spring, when this message was delivered. Alarmed lest any of the family should be ill, she ran to meet him; and, struck with the agitation visible in his countenance, exclaimed, "Good heaven, Frederic, what can be the matter!" Overcome with his emotion, he took her hand without speaking, and pressed it to his lips, with a wildness in his air which increased her terror. "For pity's sake," she cried, "do not keep me in suspense! but tell me immediately what has happened. Has Louisa met with any accident?" "My sister is well," replied Frederic: "nothing has happened in which, I fear, you will be at all interested. Dear Selina! I am going to leave Heathdale." "Going to leave Heathdale!" repeated she: "what, directly?" And thrown off her guard by the suddenness of the intelligence, her

heart too softened by the subject with which she had been occupied, all her caution forsook her, and, sinking into her chair, she turned as pale as death. Frederic threw his arm round her, in order to support her, while he exclaimed, "Selina, dearest Selina! you feel then for the misery which I endure at this separation? Ah, did you but know, could you but imagine, the sincere affection, the respectful admiration, which I have long felt for you, you would not refuse to mitigate my wretchedness by imparting a gleam of hope to cheer the tedious days of my exile."

The blood that had forsaken Selina's cheeks returned with redoubled violence; but she remained silent. "Speak, my beloved girl!" continued Frederic: "Tell me, if possible, that your heart is not indifferent to me; and I would not change my lot with the greatest monarch which the earth ever

owned! But why do I flatter myself; what right have I to expect such happiness?" "You deserve more," said Selina, raising her blushing face, "than is in my power to bestow." Intoxicated with delight, Frederic poured forth his acknowledgements in the most ardent terms; while Selina, confused, yet trying to recover her self-possession, resumed, "Do not mistake me, Frederic; though I cannot be insensible to your merit, yet I must not receive your addresses without Mr. Unwin's knowledge. I have been betrayed into a confession of my sentiments by the surprise which your information occasioned, and I fear that I have done wrong: not for the world would I repay your father's kindness to me by an act of ingratitude." "I am convinced that he will not object to my happiness," replied Frederic: "Does he not love you, my Selina; and can a fond

father deny his son that on which his existence depends?" Miss Dudley told him that he was too sanguine; for, poor and friendless as she was, Mr. Unwin might justly wish him to form a more advantageous connexion. "With a more estimable character he can never expect it," said Frederic: "But, dear Selina, for how long a time shall I be obliged to leave you!" He then related to her the particulars of his conversation with his father, and continued: "Shall I own to you, Selina, that I am not pleased with Mr. Raynsford having procured me this situation: I suspect that it is at the instigation of Montague, who, I am convinced, has been long impatient for my removal from Heathdale: his uncle never would have thought of it himself." Selina asked why he should imagine so, since she had seen very

little of Mr. Dorian lately; nor had he ever given her reason to suppose that he thought more of her than of Louisa, or any other woman. "I should be sorry," added she, "to think you of a suspicious temper." "I am not, believe me," returned Frederic. "Once assured of your affection from your own lips, all my doubts are at an end; my fears arise solely from a knowledge of Montague's character; he is as artful, as he is libertine in his principles, and my Selina is too lovely not to have raised his admiration." "You are partial to me," said Selina, smiling, "and I think a little prejudiced against Dorian, for Mr. Unwin appears to like him." Frederic answered, that Montague was certainly agreeable, and evidently courted his father's approbation, who was too good himself to suspect evil in others, where no glaring proofs

of depravity had come to his knowledge. He concluded by quoting from Milton,

> " And oft tho' Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps
> " At Wisdom's gate, and to Simplicity
> " Resigns her charge, while Goodness thinks
> no ill
> " Where no ill seems."

After some more conversation, Frederic left Miss Dudley in order to entreat his father's approbation of his passion, promising to call on her the next morning and communicate the result of his application. Though he had spoken so confidently to her of his success, yet as he approached home, he began to dread lest his father might object to the imprudence of his attachment; and feared that the coldness of age would not think Selina's virtues a sufficient counterbalance to her want of fortune. He revolved in his mind

the arguments which he should use to influence him in his favour; and so much did his courage fail him, as he contemplated the subject, that he felt his spirits relieved from an oppressive weight when he found, as he entered the parlour, that his father had taken a walk to the Manor-house. "He and William went back with Edward," said Louisa, in answer to his enquiries; "the latter called to take his leave of us previous to his departure for Lisbon." Frederic asked when he set out; to which his sister replied, that he was going to town the next morning: "Poor fellow!" she continued; he is still far from well, and the physician hopes much from change of air and climate; but I fear grief has had too fatal an effect upon his constitution." Frederic said he must walk over and bid him farewell, as it would probably be a long time before they met again: he

then hastened to join his father and brother at Mr. Raynsford's.

After some conversation upon the subject of Edward's departure, Frederic made his acknowledgements to the old gentleman for the share which he had taken in procuring him such an advantageous situation. "Nay, nay," replied he, "you owe me no good will on that account, it was Montague who first put me in mind of the interest I possess with Mr. Mordaunt." "Mr. Dorian was very obliging," said Frederic, coldly, who found his former fears confirmed by this intelligence. "I suppose Miss Dudley will not thank me for my officiousness," cried Mr. Raynsford; "what does she say to your going? Come, come, young man, you need not blush; she is a fine girl, and does credit to your taste." "I don't know why you should think that she is particularly interested in my

departure," returned Frederic. "We are not such novices," rejoined Mr. Raynsford, "as not to guess something from your frequent visits; they cannot all be paid to Mrs. Dobson. I dare say that Miss Dudley is not more inflexible than adventurers of her description commonly are, and finds love a better speculation than weaving lace." Frederic fired at this insinuation, and defended Selina's character with an unguarded warmth, which revealed to his father the state of his affections. William remaining at Mr. Raynsford's, Mr. Unwin and his youngest son returned together. "I should be sorry, Frederic," said the worthy rector, "to suppose that there is any truth in what Mr. Raynsford has hinted at: the seducer of such a mind as Miss Dudley's must be far advanced in the paths of immorality." "Believe me, my dear father," replied Frederic, "I would

not for worlds be guilty of such villany; the man only who is capable of so base an act could suspect it in another. I esteem Miss Dudley too sincerely to wish to deprive her of that conscious dignity of innocence which gives such an inexpressible charm to all her conduct. Would you, my dear Sir, vouchsafe me your favourable attention, I would venture to declare, that the hope of having it in my power, some future day, to unite myself for ever with Selina, animates all my future prospects. To you I need not urge her virtues; you cannot visit our good old nurse without hearing of them, and witnessing their extent. You might probably wish me to obtain a richer wife, but wealth cannot insure happiness; and will not love invigorate my endeavours to acquire a respectable competence?"

"How much rather, my son, would I find you imprudent than wicked!" said

Mr. Unwin. "Have you informed Miss Dudley of your attachment?" Frederic answered, that distracted at the idea of a separation, he had that afternoon revealed his love, and besought a return; that her heart pleaded for him, but she refused to encourage his affection till it received his father's sanction. "Noble minded girl!" exclaimed Mr. Unwin; "such was the conduct which I expected from Miss Dudley; she will be an honour to any family into which she enters. Yet, my dear Frederic, the dictates of prudence must not be disregarded; the prospect of love in a cottage may be very fascinating in the eyes of the young and thoughtless; but when worldly cares intrude, and an increasing family require provision, the husband and the father will look with anguish at those objects upon whom his indiscretion has entailed the numerous evils of poverty.

It must necessarily be some years before you can marry with propriety, for you know that my income is not large, and dies with me; and the money which I have advanced for your admission into the house of Messrs. Mordaunt is all that I can do for you consistently with justice to my other children. I trust therefore, my dear boy, that you will not think of embarrassing yourself with a wife till you are, in some measure, clear of the world; but when you are able to maintain her as she deserves, my blessing shall wait upon your union with Miss Dudley." "My dearest father!" said the delighted Frederic; "how shall I be sufficiently grateful for your kind consideration of my happiness! Oh, may no circumstance ever make me forgetful of your goodness, or disobedient to your wishes!" And, in the enthusiasm of the moment, he thought that his love for such a parent

would almost induce him to give up Miss Dudley, should it be necessary for his interest.

As their conversation had delayed them in their walk from the Manor-house, they found Louisa waiting for them. "I thought you long," said she; "what is become of William?" They told her of his engagement; and when they had finished the sociable meal, at which good humour presided, they talked of Frederic's approaching departure; this was on a Friday, and it was fixed for the Monday following. Mr. Unwin, according to custom, retired early, but Frederic and Louisa sat up for William, whose reluctance to leave his friend kept him out till a late hour. "I shall be quite lost without you, my dear Frederic," said his sister; "I have been so long happy in your company, that I shall feel the want of it a thousand times more than before your

return to Heathdale.' Frederic made an affectionate reply to this speech, and then informed Louisa of what had passed in his visit to Miss Dudley, and in his conference with his father: she sincerely rejoiced in the success of his wishes; and they talked over future schemes of happiness till William's return.

The next morning Frederic rose early; and, knowing that he should find Miss Dudley up, hastened to the farm, impatient to acquaint her with his father's approbation of his love. Selina read his success in his sparkling eyes and animated countenance as he entered the house; and, holding out her hand to him, she said, "I need not ask you what intelligence you bring, your appearance forbids my thinking it otherwise than happy." "May my looks ever be the heralds of joy to my dear Selina!" replied Frederic, while he pressed her offered hand to his heart.

"Yes, my love, my father is fully sensible of your merits, and gives his warmest sanction to my wishes. I should be too happy, if the thought of our approaching separation did not damp the joy that I must otherwise experience." "We will think of the present time only," answered Selina; "tell me when you leave us, and we will dismiss the subject till the hour before your departure."

Frederic acquainted her with the day, and related the chief part of what had passed between Mr. Unwin and himself, only omitting Mr. Raynsford's illiberal insinuations. He did not forget to inform her of the share which Montague had in his quitting Heathdale, and the confirmation it had given to his suspicions. "I cannot believe there is any foundation for them," returned Selina; "and I think you are rather ungrateful in putting such a con-

struction upon what would be generally thought an act of kindness." "I most sincerely hope that I may be wrong in my conjectures," replied Frederic; "but I fear"——"Well, well," interrupted Miss Dudley, with a smile, "I will not attend to the fears which you conjure up. You have put off my breakfast, which I was going to take alone, as poor nurse cannot bear the chillness of the morning, and has it in bed: you know I keep very early hours; will you favour me with your company?"

Frederic accepted the invitation with the utmost pleasure, and, as he took his seat at the table, he said, "It was at an early hour that I first saw you, my beloved Selina; never shall I forget the circumstance! That moment fixed the future colour of my fate, and virtue has riveted the chains formed by beauty." They then talked over their se-

cond meeting at the farm, and he drew from her a confession that the praises of Mrs. Dobson had strongly prepossessed her in his favour. Superior to affectation, Selina wished not to conceal from her lover the pleasure which his affection gave her; nor to deprive him of the satisfaction which he derived from a certainty of her attachment. He requested the favour of her correspondence, which was readily granted; and he also obtained from her a promise, that if any unforeseen occurrence should occasion her to leave Heathdale, he should be made acquainted with her place of residence.

Thus engaged, the time passed insensibly, till Louisa (who, missing Frederic, had easily guessed the magnet which had drawn him from the family party) made her appearance. "I came," cried she in a sprightly tone,

"to arrest Selina Dudley, spinster, for the grievous crime of felony, inasmuch as she has robbed me of Frederic Unwin, gentleman; but I must alter the charge to witchcraft, since no outward force or violence seems used upon his person." "I plead not guilty," replied Miss Dudley, "in proof of which I refer to the party himself: let him declare whether my machinations, or his own unconstrained inclinations led him hither." "I am afraid that I cannot wholly acquit you," answered Frederic; "you are certainly a little enchantress, and have bound up my heart in a magic spell; but its fetters are so easy, that I sincerely hope it will never regain its freedom." "Did I not say so?" said Miss Unwin; "but, my dear Selina, you have heard how soon he is going to leave us; and, as I cannot bear to be deprived of his company for the short time that he remains, I must

take the only means in my power to ensure it, by securing your's: you will drink tea with us this afternoon?" "Not so," replied Selina, "this afternoon you must spend with me, and to-morrow, if you will give me leave, I shall share the last which Frederic will, for some time, spend in the bosom of his family; for I cannot then be so unreasonable as to wish to deprive his father and brother of his company."

Louisa agreed to this, and then said, "With what heartfelt pleasure, my dear Selina, do I look forward to the time when you will make one of that family! how happy shall I be when I can add the name of sister to that of friend! But," continued she, in a gayer tone, "I wonder much what you could see in this odd mortal, whom I honour with the title of brother, to induce you to listen to his pretensions: unless, indeed, it was that very circumstance

which influenced you in his favour." "I would not have you flatter yourself so far," returned Miss Dudley; "there is no accounting for some people's taste; and, strange as it may appear, your brother has contrived to impress me with the idea that he is the only man to whose care I could venture to commit my earthly happiness." "Never, my dearest love, will I prove unworthy of the trust!" said Frederic: "my future life shall be spent in endeavours to deserve your good opinion; though I must still be content to owe my felicity more to your goodness than my own merit." "Ah," cried Miss Unwin, "I have found out the cause of your partiality, Selina: ever since he has known you, he has been trying to form his conduct after your model, and, by a natural impulse of vanity, you liked in him what you could not but admire in yourself." "With such

flatterers, who can wonder that I am vain?" replied Miss Dudley; "But be careful, lest I should take all that you say for gospel, and become so insufferably conceited, as to disgust my eulogists. If it should be so, remember that you would have no right to complain, for it would be all your own doing." Louisa answered that she would be responsible for the consequences; and then reminded her brother that Selina had indispensable engagements, and could not spare her whole morning to their gossiping.

"I cannot bear to think of her being employed in such menial offices," said Frederic, "and look forward, with impatience, to the time when I shall be able to place her in a situation more congenial to her merit." "And why should you object to my occupations?" replied Selina; "believe me, dear Frederic, you are influenced by prejudice.

There can be nothing degrading in making use of the faculties which nature has bestowed; I am a thousand times happier in earning my living, and in being a comfort to a fellow creature, than I could be in eating the bread of dependence. But I must wish you a good morning, for Mrs. Dobson will want my assistance in rising, and I must resort to my culinary preparations,

"Of herbs and other country messes;"

I hope a line from Milton, your favourite poet, will reconcile you to the employment."

"It is, indeed, impossible that any thing can degrade Selina," said Miss Unwin to her brother, as they returned to the parsonage; "every thing that she does derives dignity from her manner, and she raises and elevates every occupation in which she is engaged."

When they reached home Mr. Unwin had some conversation with his son relative to the situation upon which he was so soon to enter. He told him that Mr. Mordaunt had consented to receive him as an inmate in his family. "You will not object to this arrangement, my dear Frederic," continued he; "as I shall be better satisfied to have you reside with such a respectable character, than in private lodgings. In that case a young man is subject to many temptations, which he will find a difficulty in resisting: acquaintance that he may not wish to encourage will intrude upon him, more than they could were he in the house of another; and the facility with which he can commit irregularities, will leave no check upon his inclinations. I know, my son, that your affection for me will induce you to listen with deference to the advice which the anxiety of a parent dictates

for your welfare. On your conduct upon your first entrance into the world depends the future estimation in which you will be held: for, however unjust it may be, the public rarely revokes its first opinion, and our follies are remembered long after they are renounced. I trust that your attachment to Miss Dudley will preserve you from the arts of designing women, and the dangers of illicit love: the man who gives himself up to the company of females without character, deadens the best sensations of the heart, and renders himself unworthy the esteem of a virtuous woman. I need not tell you that a propensity to gaming, or too great a bias to speculation, in a man engaged in business, may be the ruin, not only of himself but, of those with whom he is connected. You must learn, my dear Frederic, to resist the force of ridicule,

and the incitements of false shame; many more have been seduced from the paths of duty by the fear of being laughed at, than by a naturally bad disposition: let your greatest dread be to act contrary to the commands of the Almighty. You have now no predilection for the pleasures of the table, and let no temptation induce you to degrade yourself from a reasonable being into a brute: when reason totters on her throne, through inebriety, you can no longer answer for yourself that you may not, in a fit of intoxication, be guilty of crimes, the effects of which no after repentance can obliterate. Do not think that I give you these precautions from a doubt of your rectitude, I only wish to warn you of the many difficulties that you will have to encounter in order to preserve it. You will be told that your notions are old-fashioned, and that

it is from a slavish fear of offending your relations, that you dare not enter into the frolics of your less scrupulous companions: own boldly that you are, indeed, afraid of doing wrong; be not ashamed, on all occasions, to avow your principles; and when it is known that the dread of ridicule has no power to make you act in contradiction to them, you will be esteemed even by those to whose conduct your's is a reproach. In short, my beloved son, return to us such as you leave us; shew us that your taste for the pure and simple pleasures of the country is not corrupted, and that the love of your family is still sufficient for your happiness: to sum up all in a few words, return to us worthy the affections of Miss Dudley."

"Oh, may I never have the misery to forfeit it!" exclaimed Frederic, with fervour. "Believe me, my dearest father, your kind advice shall dwell upon

my mind; and, in the hour of temptation, the thought of the dear inhabitants of Heathdale shall intervene to snatch me from error, and remorse. When I am far distant from Selina, let me entreat you to watch over her with guardian care; shield her from misfortune, and protect her from insult." "You may depend upon my attention," replied Mr. Unwin; "I consider Miss Dudley as my daughter, and regard her with the interest of a parent: rest satisfied that I will not be unmindful of the welfare of one, whom I so sincerely love and esteem."

When Frederic and Louisa paid their visit at the farm, Miss Dudley received them with pleasure; and exerted all her powers of entertainment to chase from Frederic's mind, the melancholy occasioned by the thought of their approaching separation. Her endeavours, in some degree, succeeded,

and he was tolerably cheerful, till the time came for their departure, and Louisa proposed returning home. He then said, with great emotion, to Selina, "I know not how to leave you! The many happy hours which I have spent in this house, perhaps never to return, crowd on my memory; and a presentiment, which I can neither account for nor overcome, seems to whisper that they will have no successor. Oh, Selina! how many accidents may prevent or retard our re-union!" "You must not give yourself up to these fancies," replied Miss Dudley, "believe me they are caused only by the depression of your spirits, and you alarm yourself with dangers, which exist not but in your own imagination: I have not the least doubt that I shall remain here unmolested; and remember that we shall meet again to morrow afternoon. Exert yourself, dear Frederic,

to throw off these gloomy apprehensions: let us enjoy the present good, nor render ourselves unhappy by a fear of future misfortunes which we may never encounter." "God grant that my fears may be ill-grounded!" returned Frederic; "but who, having such a treasure, would not dread to lose it? Adieu, my dearest girl! may the guardian angels of virtue ever watch over and protect you!" "Good night, and God bless you, my friends!" said Selina, as she accompanied them to the door: and feeling herself half infected by Frederic's melancholy, she passed an hour in musing upon her situation; when offering up her fervent prayers to Heaven for his welfare, she retired to rest.

The next day, after morning service, Frederic went to take leave of Mr. Raynsford, and Mrs. Neville: his visit to the first he could readily have dis-

pensed with, but common civility, and his particular obligations, required it. He was offered letters of introduction, by Montague, to some young men in town, which Frederic politely declined; saying, that as he was to reside with Mr. Mordaunt, he did not wish to contract acquaintance out of his circle. Dorian, laughing at his scruples, asked him when he would be old enough to chuse friends for himself. He replied that he thought himself so then; but did not wish to make his choice from among people whom he had never seen. "Why, have you seen any of Mr. Mordaunt's associates?" questioned Montague. "Certainly not; but I shall have an opportunity of doing so, before I need shew any preference," returned Frederic. Dorian, however had his private reasons for determining that he would, if possible, entangle him in a connexion with a set of dissolute

young men, his former companions in many a midnight frolic. He wrote accordingly to one of them, his particular friend, who, he thought, from the speciousness of his manners, could scarcely fail of effecting his purpose, to spare no pains to get introduced to Frederic, and acquire his good opinion; warning him to appear to acquiesce in his sentiments till he had gained an interest in his affection, and carefully to conceal his knowledge of himself: with many other instructions necessary to the completion of his designs.

From this slight digression we will revert to Mr. Raynsford, who told Frederic, that it was fortunate for him he left his heart at Heathdale, or it would have fallen a victim to the charms of Miss Mordaunt. "Would it then have been so great a calamity," asked Frederic, "to have acknowledged the power of that lady?" "Yes," replied

Mr. Raynsford; "if you call it one to be caught in the chains of a determined coquette; who loves nobody but herself, and who only strives to gain admirers that she may exult in the mischief which she occasions. Nay, I question whether you will escape as it is, for she is not over and above scrupulous in the means which she makes use of to spread the influence of her attractions: she is too much a lady of the ton to be troubled with the old fashioned restraints of modesty." "I do not imagine that my peace will be in any danger from such a character," answered Frederic. "Is she handsome?" "Certainly she is," said Mr. Raynsford, "and will not suffer herself to want adventitious aids to heighten her beauty."

Frederic soon after took his leave, and called at Mrs. Neville's, where he thought himself fortunate in not finding Father Celestin at home: he enquired

after Emma, and was told that she was expected from Bath in a short time. "I have never before been deprived of her so long," added Mrs. Neville, "and have suffered so much from it now, that I sincerely hope this seperation will be the last." After informing her of his approaching departure, and leaving his compliments for the priest, Frederic, impatient to rejoin his family, shortened his visit, and returned home.

When service was over in the afternoon, he set out to take leave of his old nurse, and to accompany Miss Dudley from the farm. While Selina was preparing for the walk, Mrs. Dobson was eloquent in her praise. She said that she should have been lost without her, for she could not have been more tender of her had she been her own child. "When she has been helping me all the morning," continued she, "she will, if nobody comes in, sit down to her pil-

low in the house, and get up a hundred times to wait upon me. It is always, 'Nurse, let me do this, or let me do that:' I'm sure my brother could kiss the ground that she walks on. Then she is so affable and so good that all the neighbours love her: why she goes into their houses, and nurses their babies as if they were her own." Frederic listened with delight to the theme of Mrs. Dobson's discourse, and nothing but the return of Selina could have made him sensible of the lapse of time. Having made nurse a present for a gown, to wear, he said, in remembrance of him, they departed, accompanied by her blessing.

Upon their arrival at the parsonage, Mr. Unwin saluted Miss Dudley with the utmost kindness; telling her that he hoped, now they were going to lose Frederic, that she would make up for his absence by the frequency of her

visits. She affectionately returned the pressure of his hand, saying, that it would give her unfeigned pleasure to contribute, in any degree, to his comfort. "We have all reason to rejoice, my dear Miss Dudley, in the day that brought you to Heathdale," added William. "It was a most happy event for me," replied Selina, "which introduced me to such kind and partial friends: I really think myself under obligations to Mrs. Smith for being the occasion of it." "Little did I imagine, my dear Selina," cried Miss Unwin, "when I first heard of your arrival, that I should spend so many delightful hours in your society!" "It is entertaining," replied she, "at this distance of time, to look back to the ideas which were suggested by a first acquaintance. One always forms some opinion of a person before one sees them; and the mysterious circumstance of a young

stranger taking refuge in a village, must have given rise to extraordinary reports: I wonder what you thought of me." "I believe it is a common propensity," returned Louisa, "to put the worst construction upon those actions of which we know not the motive: at least I am almost inclined to hope that this is the case, for I should be sorry to think myself more uncharitable than my neighbours. Certain it is, that when I first heard of you from Frederic, I supposed that you were some romantic girl, escaped from your friends in order to realize the descriptions of pastoral life which you had found in the poets; but I must do myself the justice to say, that I severely reproached myself, when I saw you, for my hasty decision." "I don't know that you had any reason," replied Miss Dudley; "for appearances were considerably against me, and Frederic imagined me to be a year

younger than I was: I was then nearly seventeen." "We should be very careful," said Mr. Unwin, "how we suffer ourselves to take up prejudices of any kind: when there are two opinions to be formed upon a subject, candour should induce us to lean towards the most favourable." Frederic observed that Mr. Raynsford did not seem to have adopted that system; for he had given him such a character of Miss Mordaunt that he almost dreaded her acquaintance. Selina asked how he had described her? "As having such an universal rage for conquest," answered Frederic, "that I shall with difficulty escape the snares which she fabricates to entrap unwary mortals. Nevertheless," continued he, in a lower tone, "I think they will be unsuccessful; for in the remembrance of you, my love, I shall carry a talisman sufficiently strong to guard my heart against all invasion."

"Are you sure of that?" returned she; "what chance can there be for a poor country girl, when put in competition with a town-bred lady, skilled in the fashionable arts of pleasing?" "She will not have the art of pleasing me," replied Frederic: "but I know that you have too just an opinion of yourself to think as you say." A look from Selina confirmed the truth of this supposition. William asked his brother if he had not also called at Mrs. Neville's: to which he answered in the affirmative, adding that she had told him Emma would soon return. "You have not seen her, I think, my dear Selina," continued he; "I am sure she would be happy in your acquaintance: Louisa must introduce you to each other." Selina answered that it would give her pleasure; as, from what she had heard of her, she felt much interested in her fate. "Poor

Emma!" said William, with a sigh; "I fear her peace is lost for ever: how much has Father Celestin to answer for in that affair!" "Now you put me in mind of him," returned Miss Dudley, "I am afraid that he is too much incensed against me to permit any intercourse between us: he will certainly think that I shall corrupt her principles." Louisa observed that he really did a great deal of mischief in the parish, and she heartily wished that he were fairly out of it: though he had never attempted to convert her, because, she supposed, he thought he should have no chance with the daughter of a clergyman. "I hope that he would not have any," said Mr. Unwin; "but a religion that rests more upon outward forms and ceremonies, than upon the regulation of the heart and affections, will have too many charms with the multitude: as it is easier to

say a stated number of prayers, and to go to confession at certain periods, than to practise the moral duties prescribed by the gospel. I fear that the emigration of priests from France, during the revolution, contributed, though many of them returned, to the spreading of their doctrines in this island: it would be well, indeed, if that were the greatest evil which the convulsions of the neighbouring kingdom brought upon us. Their idolatrous worship of reason, in contempt of revelation, gained too many partisans in England; and deism, if not atheism, made a most alarming progress. Shall man, whose finite powers are not adequate even to comprehend the system by which his will influences the motion of his body, pretend to fathom the decrees of the Omniscient, and decide on the manner in which the Deity ought to govern the Universe? Beware, my dear children,

how you listen to the sophistry of modern philosophers; for, whatever disguise they may assume, pride is the real foundation of all their errors! They cannot bear that man should own a superior, they therefore argue for the infallibility of reason; and every thing in Christianity which reason is not equal to understand, they condemn as fanatical and absurd. In the hour of temptation they will know how weak is their support; and that the knowledge of right is not sufficient to enable us to act up to it, without assistance from on high. Their so much boasted reason was given us to examine the *proofs* of revelation; not to puff us up with the vain imagination that God's thoughts are as our thoughts." Mr. Unwin was listened to with the most respectful attention while he thus discoursed; and it was his custom, particularly on a Sunday evening, to turn the conver-

sation on subjects of piety, and to take occasion, from whatever occurred, to convey instruction to his children.

Though the party endeavoured to keep up an appearance of cheerfulness, yet the remembrance of Frederic's approaching departure hung heavy upon their spirits, and, as night drew on, a general melancholy prevailed. At length Selina said, "It is useless to defer the evil hour; I believe it is only prolonging uneasiness: it is very late, and I must think of returning home." "Oh, not yet!" cried Frederic; "you will not go till after supper!" "Nor then, either, I hope," observed Louisa; "you shall partake my bed, and we will all breakfast with Frederic in the morning: the coach does not go through till past seven." "Do not refuse me the pleasure of your company as long as it is possible for me to enjoy it!" rejoined Frederic, tenderly pressing her

hand. Selina's heart was too much softened by the thoughts of losing him to deny his petition, and, Mr. Unwin and William joining in the request, she consented to stay, an arrangement being made for the convenience of Mrs. Dobson.

The next day they were assembled in the breakfast room by half past six; sadness was depicted on every countenance, and, after the first compliments, a general silence prevailed: it was broken by Mr. Unwin enquiring with whom Frederic intended to correspond. Louisa replied, with her, and with Miss Dudley. "It will be my only consolation in my exile," said Frederic: "with what anxiety I shall watch the postman in the hope of letters from Heathdale!" The provisions on the table remained almost untouched when the Chichester coach stopped at the door. Frederic sat a moment irresolute, then,

summoning all his fortitude, he arose, received the embraces of his father and brother, saluted his sister, bidding her a tender adieu, and folding Selina in his arms, "God bless you, my dearest girl!" he exclaimed; "think sometimes of your absent Frederic!" "Doubt it not," replied she, with emotion; "may you return to us successful and happy!" He once more strained her to his heart, and hurrying to the coach, was soon conveyed from the view of his regretted friends. "He is gone!" cried Louisa, as she returned into the house; "what a melancholy day this will be! you must not leave us, Selina; we will spend it together, and try to comfort each other."

Miss Dudley had thrown herself into the chair which Frederic had left, and for a moment indulged herself in the grief which his departure occasioned; it was the first separation that she

had ever experienced from one whom she loved, and it seemed like losing Mrs. Willoughby a second time. Ashamed of her weakness, she exerted herself to regain her composure, and replied to her friend, that she sincerely wished it were in her power to give herself that pleasure, but her presence at home, in a morning, could not be dispensed with. "We will try, however, what can be done," said Mr. Unwin: "if I engage Mrs. Warwick to assist nurse, will not that enable you to oblige us with your company?" Miss Dudley made her acknowledgments for his goodness, and agreed to the proposition.

In the course of the morning Mr. Dorian called, exulting in Frederic's absence, and flattering himself with the hopes of overturning all his promised schemes of happiness. He was rejoiced to meet Miss Dudley, and ex-

erted all his powers of pleasing to rouse the ladies from the dejection under which they laboured: but Selina's mind was not in a right frame to receive entertainment, and the recent departure of Frederic particularly indisposed her to listen with complacency to the man of whom he had cherished suspicions inimical to his peace. As Montague, however, who observed her coldness, turned the conversation upon subjects most congenial to her taste, and displaying sentiments opposite to his real ones, dressed himself in the borrowed ornaments of virtue, her heart reproached her with injustice; when, with all the ingenuousness of an amiable disposition, though the injury was only in her thoughts, she endeavoured to atone for it by behaving to Mr. Dorian with more freedom and politeness than she would otherwise have done. Little did she imagine the lawless

hopes which she thereby raised in his bosom! yet was he not so blinded by them as not to see that dissimulation was the only method by which he could acquire her good opinion.

The next day but one Miss Dudley received a letter from Frederic, containing many expressions of regret at their separation, and giving the particulars of his reception by Mr. Mordaunt. Eager to communicate the news to her friend, she walked to the parsonage, where she again encountered Montague. Mr. Dorian, from this time, seldom paid a visit to the farm; but he consoled himself for that self-denial by assiduously cultivating an intimacy at Mr. Unwin's, where he had the pleasure of often meeting Selina. The more Miss Dudley saw of him, the more she was confirmed in the idea that Frederic's dislike was grounded only upon jealousy, and, ac-

customed to judge for herself, she treated him with a frankness which his reception at the rectory seemed to authorize: Louisa, too, had altered her opinion of him, and thought that she had mistaken his character.

> "For neither man nor angel can discern
> "Hypocrisy, th' only evil that walks
> "Invisible, except to God alone."

Notwithstanding the unreserved manner with which Montague was treated by Selina, yet he could not but perceive that her heart was still constant to Frederic, and, his passion augmenting by the obstacles which he had to encounter, he determined to leave no scheme untried for the accomplishment of his designs. Though he prided himself upon seducing the affections of women, and thought that he was but half successful when their principles

fell not a sacrifice with their persons, yet he resolved to have recourse to any means that should be ultimately necessary to get Miss Dudley into his power.

CHAP. VII.

" There's nothing in this world can make me
joy;
" Life is as tedious as a twice-told tale,
" Vexing the dull ear of a drowsy man."

SHAKSPEARE.

" For ever, Fortune! wilt thou prove
" An unrelenting foe to love!—
" But busy, busy still art thou,
" To bind the loveless, joyless vow."

THOMPSON.

SOON after Frederic's departure, the society at Heathdale was increased by the return of Miss Neville. She was introduced to Selina by Miss Unwin, who sincerely lamented the ravages which grief had made in her appear-

ance: for the news of Edward's unhappy situation had reached her at Bath, and had made the deepest impression upon her spirits. The unremitting exertions of the friends to divert her attention from melancholy recollections, were unavailing; the powers of her mind were debilitated, and she was incapable either of receiving or communicating pleasure. She would sit for hours without appearing to notice any thing which passed, except that, when a question was addressed to her, she would answer with a languid smile, which plainly proved the little interest that she took in all that surrounded her. Yet she never refused to accompany Louisa, when she called, either to her own house, or to the farm. Despairing of finding happiness in any place, she seemed indifferent how she was disposed of; and the sight of Montague had alone the power of rousing

her from her torpor. Perceiving him one day at the window of the parsonage, as she was leaning on Selina's arm, she suddenly stopped, saying, with the utmost emotion, "I cannot go in, Miss Dudley; indeed, I cannot: the presence of my lost Edward's brother would be death to me! Merciful God! the remembrances that crowd upon my brain are more than I can support! When I last saw him, how different were my sensations!" She trembled universally; and it was with difficulty that she could walk back to the farm, where a flood of tears, in some degree, relieved her spirits. Selina was in hopes that this occurrence might have the effect of rousing her dormant faculties; but she was mistaken: when her first agitation had subsided, she sunk again into listless dejection.

Mrs. Neville was greatly alarmed at her daughter's situation, and commu-

nicated her fears to Father Celestin. "It would surely have been better," said she, "if I had not separated her from Edward Dorian: you see that her gentle nature is unable to bear such a trial; and I fear my severity will be attended by fatal consequences." "As you have acted only in obedience to my advice, Madam," replied the unfeeling priest, "I will be answerable for its effects. Emma's acquaintance with Miss Dudley, a girl obstinate in error, is not likely to dispose her mind to be satisfied with your commands: nevertheless, as it may divert her attention from past events, it may be permitted for the present. The only effectual way to make her forget that heretic, and to secure her from his future machinations, is to unite her with one of our holy religion. Such a connexion would keep her stedfast in the right faith, and preserve her from all danger

of future corruption." "The proposal would be cruel," said Mrs. Neville, "while every thought of her heart is centered in Edward. Surely the least which I can do, is to let her remain unmolested, since I must not consent to her happiness in the manner that she wishes." "And so leave her at liberty to receive Mr. Edward Dorian's addresses in secret when he shall return?" answered Father Celestin: "depend upon it, Madam, that if she be not, before that period, in the possession of another, vain will be all your endeavours to keep them asunder. If, on the contrary, she were united to Mr. Fitzherbert, a sense of duty would force her to exert herself, and drive that heretic from her thoughts: but while she perceives your weak pity, she still entertains a hope that you may be wrought upon to comply with her wishes. Proceed with firmness, and she will be un-

der the necessity of obedience. Nevertheless, Madam, you must do as you please; only remember, that the day which gives her to a Deist, to the eternal destruction of all the doctrines which I have inculcated, is the last that I will remain within these doors." Thus urged by the director of her conscience, the tenderness of the mother yielded to the influence of superstition, and Mrs. Neville agreed that Father Celestin should convey her consent to Mr. Fitzherbert, who had long solicited it in vain. Emma viewed that gentleman's assiduities with the same indifference with which she regarded every other occurrence. Wrapt up in her own grief, she scarcely seemed to notice that he was in the room; and all his efforts to win her attention were ineffectual. Hopeless at length of gaining any ground in her affection, he complained to Father Celestin of the small pro-

spect that he had of success; when the priest assured him that perseverance was all that was necessary. "Her mother shall speak to her on the subject," continued he: "if once she can be prevailed upon to give you her hand, her principles will not allow her to withhold her heart; and she will be every thing that you can wish." Mr. Fitzherbert's passion not being of that refined nature which refuses to owe its happiness but to the love of its object, he consented to the proposition. The next day, as Mrs. Neville was sitting with her daughter, she, in conformity to Father Celestin's directions, thus addressed her: "My dear Emma, I am no longer young; and cannot, agreeably to the common course of nature, expect to live many years: there is nothing in this world that I so strongly wish, as to see you happily settled, before death shall deprive you of your

only remaining parent. Were you united with one of our sacred persuasion, I should die in peace, in the full conviction that nothing would ever have power to separate you from the bosom of our holy church. Mr. Fitzherbert is a man of an easy disposition, a good moral character, and, above all, a good Catholic. With him your soul will be in security; and he loves you with the sincerest affection. Tell me, my dear child, could you be happy with him?" Emma fixed her eyes upon her mother with a look of hopeless dejection; then, casting them down again, she replied, "Do not regard my happiness, Madam, it is of little consequence: if my marrying Mr. Fitzherbert will contribute to your's, I know no reason why I should object to it." "Do not talk so, my love," said Mrs. Neville; "it is your welfare more than my own that I wish to consult." "*It is too late!*" re-

turned Emma, mournfully: "all on this side the grave is to me a blank: give me to whom you please: so you are satisfied, I shall be so too." "Cruel girl!" cried Mrs. Neville, bursting into tears; "you rend my heart by the despair expressed in such unqualified obedience." "Why do you weep?" said Emma, going up to her mother, and tenderly saluting her cheek; "you do not see me weep: do not I tell you that I will be Fitzherbert's wife: have you any other wish? and I will be happy too, if you desire it."

Almost suffocated with her emotion, Mrs. Neville was unable to reply. Father Celestin just then entering the room to know the result of the conference, Emma requested him to comfort her mother. "I have told her that I will accept Mr. Fitzherbert," continued she, "and, though she pressed me to do it, my compliance seems

only to add to her distress." The priest told her that she had acted very commendably, and that, when Mrs. Neville was a little more composed, she would think so too. He then advised her to go up to her own apartment, and leave him to console her mother by religious considerations. "Oh, Father!" cried Mrs. Neville, when Emma had left the room, "I cannot support the sight of that dear child's uncomplaining woe! If I am not allowed to recall Edward, we shall both fall victims to the rigid severity of your decrees!" "Why will you torment ou self with these groundless fears?" replied the confessor; "you are weaker than a girl: the smallest difficulties intercept your progress; and the least opposition diverts you from your most necessary purpose. Has not your daughter freely consente l to espouse Fitzherbert? What more can you

wish? Nothing but good can flow from such a connexion. How often must I inculcate the certain truth, that when she is his wife, her duty will oblige her to appear cheerful, and the effort will soon be followed by the reality." "God grant that it may be so!" answered Mrs. Neville: "but her consent, as you call it, arose only from the resignation of despair; indifferent to whom she was given, as she was denied to him who could alone contribute to her happiness." "Her union with a heretic *must* be entirely out of the question," returned the priest: "if the state of her mind is such as you describe, she will not be more miserable with Mr. Fitzherbert than in her present situation; and it may, ultimately, have the most desirable effect upon her sentiments." "May the Holy Virgin endue her with fortitude!" replied Mrs. Neville; "I yield to your superior wis-

dom. May my presentiments of evil, from this marriage, be false and groundless, as you would persuade me they are!" "What evil can arise from it?" retorted Father Celestin, impatiently: "does your daughter *now* possess happiness? she can but be unhappy as Fitzherbert's wife." Mrs. Neville was almost ready to exclaim, with Constance, "*He* talks to me, who never had a *child!*" but her respect for the priest made her conceal the poignancy of her feelings.

Emma's doom was now fixed; and Father Celestin spared no pains to hasten the nuptials, fearful lest Edward should return before they were completed. He was apprehensive, too, that Miss Dudley might dissuade her from making vows of love at the altar, in presence of the Most High, when her heart was dead to every sentiment of affection, and persuaded her mother

to leave her no opportunity of a private conference, either with her or Miss Unwin. Thus, abandoned to the influence of the priest, Emma was led a passive victim to the temple; and, in an evil hour, entered into those irrevocable engagements which no after repentance could dissolve. In the afternoon of the same day, as Selina, Louisa, and Montague, were sitting together at Mr. Unwin's, William entered in visible agitation. "Father Celestin has completed his work," he exclaimed; "and Emma Neville is Fitzherbert's wife!" "Good heaven, is it possible!" cried his sister: "with what secrecy has the affair been conducted!" Montague asked when they were married. "This morning," replied William: "O, Dorian! your brother's few remaining hopes are now for ever annihilated!" "How my soul revolts at Mrs. Neville's conduct!" cried Miss Dudley, with the

impetuosity of a young and ardent mind; "how could any motive influence her so to sacrifice her daughter's happiness? Bigotry and superstition have indeed triumphed over the feelings of a mother, and blasted Emma's every prospect of tranquillity!" "I fear that she has sealed her own misery," said Louisa: "poor Emma!" "Who but a Romish priest," resumed Selina, "a man who, from the nature of his education, must have banished the social affections from his breast, could, after separating Miss Neville from her lover, have taken advantage of the torpor arising from despair, to dispose of her passive hand in contradiction to all the emotions of her heart? and what kind of man must Mr. Fitzherbert be, to receive her on such terms! Unhappy Emma! it will not be long before she awakes from her present state of apathy, to the most lively and

poignant sorrow!" "Where are they to live?" questioned Montague. "With Mrs. Nevillo," replied William; "I had the information from your uncle: she did not give her consent to the marriage, till Fitzherbert had promised not to separate her daughter from her." Louisa observed, that they should now be enabled to enjoy more of her society; for the odious priest could not suspect them of wishing to prejudice her against the man to whom she was already united. "I easily comprehend why we have seen her so little of late," said Selina, "and never unaccompanied by Mrs. Neville: Father Celestin justly dreaded that we should oppose ourselves to his cruel intentions. Never can I be an unconcerned spectator of oppression! and I should have exerted all my influence to persuade Miss Neville not to resign the right with which, in this land of freedom, every

individual is blest, that of a negative upon a subject which involves their present happiness or misery." "But do not you think that, if her husband treats her with kindness, her heart may in time be detached from my brother?" questioned Montague. Little interested for Emma, he availed himself of the unguarded warmth excited by the occasion in Selina, to dive into her sentiments. Miss Dudley replied, "I fear not: her feelings must revolt at the indelicacy of the man who could gratify his passion without consulting the happiness of her whom he pretended to love; for, if her tongue objected not to the union, yet he could not be ignorant of her attachment to Edward." "You are then of opinion that nothing can displace a first affection?" said Mr. Dorian. "By no means," returned Selina; "I am far from thinking that love is so irresistible as it has been some-

times represented. Where it is inimical to duty, it both may and ought to be overcome; but the effort requires a stronger mind than, I fear, Emma possesses. Her's has been weakened by indulgence: her mother's mistaken kindness has been the cause of all her unhappiness. Did parents but consider how much their children's character depends upon the manner in which they are brought up, they would surely be more careful how they fulfil that important obligation." "But, you think," rejoined Montague, "that where a first passion does not clash with duty, it generally retains its ascendency?" "It depends greatly, I believe, upon the disposition of the person who entertains it," replied Miss Dudley, wondering at the pertinacity with which he renewed the question. "In some minds, nothing but a conviction of the unworthiness of the object esteemed, can effect

an alteration in sentiment: and when so important a victory over themselves is once gained, they will seldom, if ever, run the risk of being deceived a second time." "Yet such is the formation of the human heart," observed Montague, "that there is no answering for its variableness. May not superior powers of pleasing, in another, insensibly divert our affection, though its first object should remain unchanged?" "Only in light and inconsiderate people, I should imagine," returned Miss Dudley, "where impulse, more than reason, guided the choice. For my own part, I can form no idea that my sentiments could ever undergo an alteration, while he who had once gained my favour continued to deserve it." "But do you allow nothing," asked Dorian, "to the effect of absence? May not a present lover," continued he, in a lower voice (as he ob-

served William and Louisa in conversation at the window), " urging his suit with all the fervour excited by the charms of beauty, raise feelings, even in the bosom of chastity, which should force her to own the irresistible sway of nature?" As he spoke, he took Selina's hand. " I am ignorant of those sensations," replied she, withdrawing it in evident displeasure; " and therefore can form no opinion upon the subject." So saying, she arose and joined her friends at the window. William soon after retired, to indulge in solitude the grief which he felt upon Emma's marriage: and Montague, finding that all his endeavours to recover Miss Dudley's confidence were, for the remainder of the evening, ineffectual, took his leave early, blaming his unpropitious stars that had not enabled him, rather than Frederic, to gain her affection.

The following week, the friends paid their bridal visit to Mrs. Fitzherbert. She received them with pleasure, and for a while exerted herself to appear cheerful; but it was as the flash of lightning playing upon a dark cloud, and she soon relapsed into her usual melancholy. Miss Unwin and Selina returned home, impressed with the deepest sentiments of pity for her unfortunate fate. Yet, had Mr. Fitzherbert been a man of delicacy and feeling, he might, in time, have effected the desirable change which Father Celestin had prognosticated; but, though not ill-natured, he was totally incapable of conceiving the anguish of disappointed love, or of making allowance for Emma's peculiar situation. Wearied out, at length, with her continual sadness, he reproached her bitterly with want of affection for him; refused her the liberty of being alone;

and often took occasion to abuse heretics, and even Edward, in her presence. Miss Dudley's prediction was now accomplished. Stung to the soul by this treatment, Emma was awakened to all the agony of fruitless repentance: she perceived with anguish that, though miserable before, her sorrow yet admitted of augmentation; and too late lamented having given herself a master, to whom she was accountable for the indulgence of her grief. Thus passed their days, in dissatisfaction on his part, and unavailing regret on her's.

CHAP. VIII.

"But all was false and hollow; though his
"tongue
"Dropt manna, and could make the worse
"appear
"The better reason, to perplex and dash
"Maturest counsels: for his thoughts were
"low."

"Virtue may be assailed but never hurt,—
"Yea even that which mischief meant most
harm,
"Shall in the happy trial prove most glory."

MILTON.

MONTAGUE long watched in vain for an opportunity of making his peace with Selina, for she studiously

avoided suffering him to speak with her in private; till, at length, he met her in the park as she was returning from Midhurst. "Is it possible," said he, in a tone of sadness, "that it is in Miss Dudley's nature to be implacable? can no contrition atone for a few unguarded words?" "Unguarded words," replied Selina, gravely, "often betray the real disposition." "If no allowance be made for the infirmities of human nature," returned he, "who shall escape reprehension? Dear Miss Dudley, let your charity plead in my behalf, and believe my earnest protestations that you shall never have reason to repent your generosity. Indeed you have judged me harshly; a heart capable, as mine is, of appreciating your virtues, cannot be wholly destitute of good qualities." Selina coldly asked, of what consequence her good opinion could be to Mr. Dorian. To which he answer-

ed, of the utmost: he should be sorry to lose the esteem of any one whom he respected and admired, and there was no one who more strongly excited those sentiments in his mind than herself. "I see you begin to relent," continued he; "may I not take this hand as the pledge of peace?" "Were I sure that you would never repeat your offence,"—said she. "Believe me, I never will," he replied, "for I detest the remembrance of my fault. May some terrible and unexpected misfortune fall on my head, when I break promises so solemnly given!" "I will think no more of it," returned Selina; "have you heard lately from your brother?" "A thousand thanks for this goodness, amiable Miss Dudley!" exclaimed Dorian: "I propose writing to Edward in a few days, when I shall inform him of Emma's marriage. Ah, my God! how great is the misery of

loving without hope!" "May he bear the intelligence with fortitude!" replied Selina: "I have often heard William Unwin speak of him, and, though I know him not, I sincerely sympathize in his misfortunes." "I will tell him of your pity," answered Montague, "he is acquainted with your character, and it cannot fail to afford him some consolation." They now reached the gate where the path to the farm separated from that to the Manor-house, and Selina wished Mr. Dorian a good morning.

Thus by the force of dissimulation, and at the expence of promises which he was far from intending to perform, did Dorian succeed in making his peace with Miss Dudley. He exulted in the triumph of his artifices, and exclaimed, as he watched her receding footsteps, "So, I have, at last, silenced her scruples! Does she think that I will not be

revenged for her haughtiness? Yes, proud girl! if I cannot subdue your affections, if it be impossible to supplant your favoured Frederic, I will, at least, bend your lofty soul, and you shall, one day, be glad to sue for mercy to him whom, now, you have so hardly condescended to pardon!" As he walked home, his whole thoughts were bent upon a trial of Selina's constancy; for since she had forgiven one offence, it was possible she might another: so argued Montague. Yet he was fearful that she might be irritated to forbid him her presence, and therefore resolved to make use of the plea of intoxication to excuse the attempt which he meditated: he thought that it would also be necessary to inspire him with courage, for there is a dignity in real virtue which strikes even the libertine with awe.

Accordingly one evening, when he had dined with a party of gentlemen,

where he had fortified himself with liberal libations to the God of wine; he repaired to the farm, and finding only Walter in the house, or outward apartment, proceeded to the parlour. Mrs. Dobson had retired to rest, and Miss Dudley was engaged in reading that excellent novel, Cecilia. She was in the middle of Albany's affecting story, and her eyes were bathed in tears: but, upon his entrance, though she was vexed at the interruption, she received him with her usual politeness. "Good heaven, Miss Dudley," he exclaimed, "you have been weeping! what can have occasioned this distress? you know not how sensibly it afflicts me." "Do not alarm yourself," said she, "for I wept but at fictitious woes: I seldom indulge myself in such studies, as they certainly weaken the mind. Have you read Cecilia? I was deeply interested in Albany's pathetic narrative." "Yes,

I am well acquainted with it," he replied: "how I honour your sensibility! But, my dear Miss Dudley, do not waste all your pity upon a fabricated tale; reserve some portion of it for a man, to whom you are not a stranger, whose sufferings are real, as his case is hopeless!" He gazed upon her, with supplicating looks, while he continued, in a softened tone, "Paint to yourself the deplorable situation of one, who sees every day an object worthy of his most tender affection; his whole soul adores her, he lives but in her presence; yet he totally despairs of meeting with any return to so fervent, so unconquerable a passion! and his misery is embittered by the reflection that it is, perhaps, to fortune, more than to merit, that his rival is indebted for his happiness. Had he first had the opportunity of pleading his suit, of endeavouring to win her inestimable heart, while it was yet free, he

might have succeeded; he might, at this moment, have been in possession of a felicity which he would resign his life to obtain! Oh, Miss Dudley! can there be any anguish to equal his!" He took Selina's hand, as he spoke, and pressed it between his own, in the utmost agitation. "What do you mean, Mr. Dorian?" said she; "of whom do you speak?" "Do not these strong emotions," he answered, "which vainly I endeavour to restrain, betray the secret which I have so long silently nourished in my bosom? Turn not from me with displeasure, Selina! I ask not your love, it is your pity only that I implore!" Though Miss Dudley was possessed of an excellent understanding, yet she was too artless, and had too little experience of the world to suspect, that it was in the power of artifice to dissemble agony that appeared so uncontroulable.

Nothing so much excites our compassion as sufferings which we think occasioned by ourselves, and Selina felt the sincerest commiseration for Dorian: he saw it beam in her eyes, and, pursuing his advantage, threw himself at her feet. This roused her to a recollection of what she owed to herself, and, above all, to Frederic. "Rise, Mr. Dorian," said she, in a firm tone; "this behaviour I did not expect from you: you have confessed yourself not ignorant of my engagements to Frederic, I therefore cannot but consider it as an insult." "Never will I rise," he replied, "till I have obtained your pity and forgiveness. Cruel Selina! let the tedious silence which your virtue has imposed upon me plead in my favour! Could I have preserved it longer and lived, my hapless love should not now have reached your ears; and even now I have been using means to obtain

false courage, which enables me to make this avowal." This declaration had a very different effect upon Miss Dudley from what Montague intended; he imagined that it would excuse his conduct, and, at the same time, render her fearful of irritating him, by refusing his request; but it served only to inspire her with indignation. Forcibly drawing away her hand, she arose, saying, "Since you have thought fit, Mr. Dorian, to come here in a state in which you are incapable of behaving with propriety, you must give me leave to wish you a good evening. Walter will shew you to the door, and for the future I shall decline your visits: I will not, a second time, subject myself to insult." She turned to ring the bell, when Montague caught hold of her gown, intreating her to hear him, "Do not ring, I beseech you!" he exclaimed: "I will leave you, if you

insist upon it; but Oh, Selina! it is hard, very hard, to be thus condemned to banishment for a crime which you have yourself occasioned. Had you been less amiable, less beautiful, I should never have offended!" "From the time that you knew of my engagements with Frederic," replied Selina, "you ought to have considered me as the wife of another: it was your duty to have avoided my society if it was inimical to your peace.—But I am waiting, Sir, to see you withdraw." "I cannot quit you while you are thus displeased," rejoined Dorian: "promise me, at least, that you will not shun me when you are with your friends, and I will give you my word not to intrude upon you when you are alone. Oh, Miss Dudley, is this much to grant to love like mine! I came to you miserable, and you send me from you with augmented anguish!" Here

the practised dissembler concealed his face with his hands, and groaned aloud. Again almost softened by his apparent distress, Selina answered, that she could promise nothing, for her future conduct would be guided by his. "Then will you not," cried Montague, "at least condescend to say, that *if* I give you no further cause of complaint, you will not mention my offence to the Unwins: remember I ask it only conditionally, and surely, upon this condition, you may safely grant it!" As he spoke he raised his head, and Selina perceived that his cheeks were wet with tears. Afraid of being diverted even from her first resolution, she hastily replied, "*If* you keep your word I will not betray your secret. Once more good night." "A thousand blessings on you!" exclaimed he, in a distracted tone; "may you be happy though I never shall!" So

saying, he snatched her hand to his lips, and rushed out of the house.

When Miss Dudley had recovered her composure, and her judgment was no longer influenced by her feelings, she repented having promised concealment. As she reflected, she saw that it would oblige her to treat Montague as usual in the presence of her friends; otherwise they would naturally enquire into the reason; and as she looked back on his behaviour, she thought it proceeded more from ungoverned passion, than a delicate affection. Frederic's former suspicions now crowding at once on her mind, she feared that they were not unfounded; and she determined, at all events, to maintain the utmost reserve towards Dorian, whenever she could do so without its being remarked, and never, upon any account, to be with him alone. "After

what has passed," said she to herself, "if I give him another opportunity of declaring his sentiments, I shall deserve to be insulted:" and a letter the next morning from Frederic, in which he reverted to his opinion of Dorian, confirmed her in this resolution.

Montague, in the mean time, was employed in meditating schemes to separate Miss Dudley from her friends; for he plainly saw, that while she remained her own mistress, and independent, he had nothing to hope. He would have proceeded that evening to much greater lengths, had he perceived the least prospect of being forgiven; but he feared exciting her displeasure too far, lest, by her carefully avoiding him, he should be deprived of the opportunity of making future attempts. He vowed revenge upon her for her abominable prudery, (as he termed it,) and his whole thoughts were bent upon

finding out some plan to involve her in distress, in hopes of inducing her to fly to him for the succour which it would not be in Frederic's power to afford. An opportunity too soon offered of putting this scheme into execution.

From misfortunes, which neither industry nor skill can always elude, Mrs. Dobson found herself at Christmas unable to pay the whole of the rent which was due the preceding Michaelmas. The unfavourable season had caused a failure in her crops, and had spread a disease among her cattle, of which many had died. Thus situated, being unable to walk herself to the Manor-house, she begged her brother to inform Mr. Raynsford of her losses, and to petition that he would allow her a longer time to make good her payments. Walter returned with the information that he had seen Mr. Raynsford, who had told him that he should

certainly seize the stock if the rent were not ready at the proper time; others, he said, had suffered from the season, and if such excuses were to be admitted from all the tenants he might be left pennyless himself. Poor Mrs. Dobson, worn down with continual pain, burst into tears at this intelligence, and bemoaned herself in the most affecting manner. Walter was trying to comfort her, though he saw no remedy for the misfortune, when Miss Dudley came in from the parsonage; she had been to see the family depart, who were leaving home for a fortnight. Surprised and grieved to find nurse in such affliction, she anxiously enquired the cause, and was told the particulars by Walter. Selina had before no idea, though she knew Mrs. Dobson was not rich, that her circumstances were at all embarrassed, and now enquired if she had no means of

raising the money. "No, no," replied she despondingly; "how in the world should I get it? I have hardly been able to go on for the last half year; for just as I thought the money would be coming in from a fat beast, the poor creature died. I can't any way pay the rent without selling the stock, and then how am I to go on with the farm? The squire might as well take possession at once: but I never thought that he would not give me a few months, when my poor husband, who is dead and gone, used always to be so punctual in his payments." Selina expressed considerable indignation against Mr. Raynsford, and then asked Mrs. Dobson how it was likely that a few months should enable her to procure the money. She answered, that she had plenty of winter fodder, though the crops of corn had failed; the wet season too was favourable for the grass, and the cattle

that was worth little now would fetch a good sum when fattened; besides that, she should have some calves and early lambs to dispose of in the spring. "Well, comfort yourself, my good nurse," returned Selina, whose affectionate heart strongly urged her to put forth all her exertions, "since I find that, by gaining time, you have a fair prospect of fulfilling your engagements, I will go to the Manor-house and use all my eloquence in your behalf." Leaving Mrs. Dobson, who had no doubt of her success, overcome with joy and gratitude, Miss Dudley, in agitated spirits, pursued her way across the park. Mr. Raynsford, upon her enquiring for him, ordered her to be shewn into his study, where, leading her to a seat, he thus addressed her: "Well, my pretty lass, to what am I indebted for this visit." Selina, rather offended at the familiarity of this

speech, replied, that she came to petition him in behalf of a distressed widow, to whom his forbearance would not only be an act of charity, but eventually would be most for his own interest, since he would, in that case, receive his money without incurring the odium of violent measures: she then informed him of Mrs. Dobson's future prospects of responsibility. "You are an excellent casuist, my dear," returned Mr. Raynsford; "and though I do not give much credit to your good woman's calculations, yet I am willing enough to give her time upon certain conditions." Thinking little ceremony necessary with a girl whose interest it was to conciliate his favour, he was proceeding to insult, when Selina, repulsing him with indignation, exclaimed, "Never will I purchase your forbearance on such terms!" and immediately left the house. "Whu—u," whistled

Mr. Raynsford, "here's a piece of work! I wonder who she is that she is to set up for virtue, forsooth, and fancy that she is not to be touched!" So saying, he joined Montague in the parlour, and told him what had passed. "Did you ever know a girl with such an abundant share of pride?" he concluded: "She pretends to pity this woman, indeed I suppose she can't go on without her, and yet she has the impudence to give herself these airs!" Dorian's heart bounded at his uncle's recital: nothing, he thought, could have happened more fortunately for his purposes, and he failed not to take advantage of it, advising Mr. Raynsford by all means to seize the stock, or he would inevitably lose his money. "I should not care for the rent," returned Mr. Raynsford, "if the girl would but be grateful for my kindness." "I know her, Sir," replied Montague,

"better than you do, and am certain there is nothing to be hoped for while she retains her independence. Perhaps if you persevere in your measures with Mrs. Dobson, Selina may be induced to offer her the loan of her little property, (for I am told that she has something,) and when once she has experienced the evils of penury, she will be glad to come into any terms that present a prospect of relief from its miseries. Possibly she does not now believe that you have any intention of proceeding rigorously." Mr. Raynsford swore that she should find it so to her cost, for he was determined to bend her proud spirit; and it would be strange if he could not manage to ruin them all.

While the uncle and nephew were thus agreeing to persecute poor Selina, she was pondering upon the very measure which Montague hoped that she

would adopt. Dreading the distress which the result of her visit would occasion to Mrs. Dobson and her brother, she meditated upon the possibility of calling in some of her own capital: but, the business having been transacted for her by Mr. Unwin, she was ignorant whether any notice was requisite for the purpose. She thought it most unfortunate that the departure of the good rector and his family, should just have preceded her knowledge of Mrs. Dobson's embarrassment; yet she determined, in case she could not immediately command her own money, that she would write to Mr. Unwin, and borrow the necessary sum, rather than see her humble friends involved in ruin. Having made this resolution, she returned to the farm with a cheerful countenance, and, after slightly mentioning that nothing was to be hoped from Mr. Raynsford, communicated her intention.

The good woman, though profuse in her expressions of gratitude, objected to availing herself of Miss Dudley's generosity without Mr. Unwin's knowledge; urging that people would think that she had imposed upon her inexperience. Many were the arguments made use of by Selina, ere she could conquer Mrs. Dobson's scruples; but having at length succeeded, rather in imposing silence than imparting conviction, she sat down to write to the house wherein her small fortune was deposited. The day came on which she expected an answer, but none arrived. In anxious suspense, and fearful lest all assistance should be too late, as now a week only intervened before Mr. Raynsford's rent day, she determined to wait but another post before she applied to Mr. Unwin. The next morning she was assisting nurse to dress, when a rap at the door called her down, and a letter was put into her

hand: eagerly she opened it, in the pleasing hope that it would impower her to communicate pleasure, and then sunk into a chair, almost overpowered with the sad reverse of her feelings! The letter informed her of the probable entire loss of her fortune, by the failure of those into whose hands it had been intrusted, as little or nothing was expected to be retrieved from the general wreck. Severe as was this blow, Selina's habitual reliance on Providence would have supported her under it, had she been the only sufferer; but she had raised expectations in others which she had no longer the power to fulfil, for she could not now even borrow the money of Mr. Unwin: yet she could inform him of his old servant's distress, which, if in his power, she was sure it would be in his inclination to relieve. With this gleam of comfort to enliven the melancholy intelligence, she was preparing to

return to Mrs. Dobson, when something falling heavily upon the floor, in the room above, alarmed her, and going up stairs she found the poor woman motionless upon the ground. Her own efforts to recover her being ineffectual, she despatched a neighbour for medical assistance, and went herself to seek for Walter, to whom she softened the information by the hope that it was only a temporary attack. This hope, however, vanished upon the arrival of the apothecary, who pronounced Mrs. Dobson's disorder to be an apoplectic fit, which would, probably in a few hours, terminate her existence. Inexpressibly shocked herself, Miss Dudley still strove to moderate the sorrow of Walter, by suggesting that his sister was removed from a near prospect of many troubles: and, to draw his attention from the present trial, informed him how she had been disappointed in the hope of yield-

ing them assistance. "Poor creature! poor creature!" cried Walter, while the tears rolled down his aged cheeks, "it is best for her that she is taken away—if it must be so. God's will be done!—but it is hard to bear!" Mrs. Dobson remained insensible till evening, and then expired. The next day Selina asked the old man whether she should write to Mr. Unwin to advance the sum requisite for his going on with the farm, as there was, now, no time to be lost. He shook his head, thanked her, and replied that he had no heart then to enter into business for himself, he had rather return to service: so, as soon as his sister was buried, as she had left him every thing, he would sell the furniture and stock, pay the squire, and seek for employment as a gardener. "That is, Miss," continued he, "if you will go to Mr. Unwin's, and stay there till he comes back; for I am sure he will

take care of you." Selina begged him to pursue his own plans, and not to be anxious about her; for though she did not mean to go to the rectory till the family came home, yet she had formed a scheme of obtaining a livelihood, in which, with their assistance, she had no doubt of succeeding: but, as she had a little stock of money reserved, she should, after the funeral, take up her abode with Mrs. Warwick. Mrs. Warwick was an elderly woman, who, by keeping a shop, had saved enough to buy a cottage and purchase an annuity. Walter would have been better satisfied that Miss Dudley should have gone to the parsonage, but, finding his persuasions ineffectual, acquiesced in her determination. After the last testimonies of respect were paid to Mrs. Dobson, Selina left the farm; and her humble friend, in a few days, set out for London, taking leave of her with

many expressions of regret at their separation.

No sooner had Mr. Unwin and his family returned home, than they heard of the events which had taken place in such rapid succession in their absence. Shocked at poor nurse's sudden death, and grieved for her friend, Louisa hastened to the cottage. Finding Miss Dudley sitting at work by the fire-side, she flew to her, and embracing her with emotion, "Cruel Selina," she exclaimed, "to hoard up your sorrows in your own bosom, and not to write me word of the misfortunes that had befallen you!" "My dear Louisa," replied Miss Dudley, "I am truly sensible of your friendship; yet to what purpose should I have afflicted you with the knowledge of evils which it was not in your power to avert. But why this agitation, my beloved girl?" for Miss Unwin was weeping violently; "believe

me, what relates to myself has not disturbed the equanimity of my mind." "How is it possible that you can exert such fortitude," cried Louisa, "when my heart is almost bursting at the thought of the loss that you have sustained?" "Dearest Louisa, what room is there, on that account, for the exertion of fortitude?" returned Miss Dudley. "I have, indeed, felt much for Mrs. Dobson and her brother, but she is removed from suffering, and change of scene will, I trust, recruit his spirits. For myself, I have not lost that in which I placed my felicity: does not my Frederic still remain constant, and do not I possess your love, and that of your family, as much as ever?" "Ah surely, surely!" said Miss Unwin; "but why did you not go to our house, instead of taking up your abode here? It was unkind of you, Selina, to deprive my father of the satis-

faction which he would have derived from doing you service." "I can never willingly incur pecuniary obligations," answered Miss Dudley. "In a case of absolute necessity, there is no man whom I would sooner apply to than Mr. Unwin; but while I am blest with health and abilities to gain my own subsistence, I cannot bear the idea of being a burden to any one. I think myself tolerably qualified for the office of governess in a private family, which I should prefer to being teacher in a school; but if we cannot hear of the former situation, I must submit to the latter, and I will trust to your friendship to give me a recommendation." Louisa replied that she was sure her father would not hear of it; why could she not live with them; Heathdale would appear a desert without her. "My beloved girl!" rejoined Selina, "you overwhelm me with your kind-

ness; but in this I must be resolute: I will not be dependent even upon my dearest friend. Promise me, then, that you will exert your interest to procure me the situation of which I was speaking." "If you are quite inflexible we will endeavour to serve you as you desire," returned Miss Unwin; "but indeed, Selina, I did not think that you had been of so unbending a spirit." "Well, that is settled, my love," said Miss Dudley, "and we will talk of something else." She then told her of Mr. Raynsford's threats to Mrs. Dobson, and, with tears and blushes, of his insult to herself. "Think, my Louisa, said she, "of this horrid offer from a man of his rank in life, to a friendless, destitute orphan; yet, perhaps, sprung from parents equal in fortune to this licentious tyrant!" "Good heaven, Selina!" cried Miss Unwin, "had he really the effrontery to ask you to be his

mistress?" "He gave me to understand," returned Miss Dudley, "that those were the certain conditions on which I might obtain favour for my poor friends: but oh, how cruel are the tender mercies of the wicked! Thank God, Walter has been able to satisfy this man's demands, and Mrs. Dobson never had the anguish of knowing that I could not save her from his malice!" Miss Unwin now hoped that her friend did not mean to stay with Mrs. Warwick, but would go home with her, and remain till they heard of something that would suit her. "Ah, my dear Louisa!" replied Miss Dudley, fixing her penetrating eyes upon her face, "are you sure that if I had once taken up my residence in your family, your kind wish to keep me there would not lessen your endeavours to procure me the means of independence? No, my love, it is much better that I should stay at the cottage:

I shall see almost as much of you as I should at the parsonage, and you cannot doubt my being very comfortable here." "You are really a sad obstinate girl," observed Miss Unwin; "but since I cannot prevail with you, I must try my father's influence. What do you think my brother would say, should he hear that you were deprived of your own home, and lived in the village any where but with us? Indeed we shall never obtain his pardon if we suffer you to depart from Heathdale." "On that subject my resolution is fixed," answered Selina, "and not Frederic himself could induce me to alter it: you cannot doubt, my dear girl, that I shall be truly grieved to leave you; but I must not suffer my inclinations to make me wander from the plain path of duty." Louisa said that she would at least see if they could not change her intention of remaining at the cottage; she would

speak to her father about it: then adding, that she hoped to find her in a more flexible humour at her return, she bade her adieu.

Montague Dorian, meanwhile, had not the least inclination to let his uncle profit by the difficulties in which he had advised him to involve Selina. After considering the subject for some time, he thought that getting her to town would be the most effectual method of furthering his own designs: it was true that this would throw her into the way of Frederic; but he was not without hopes of inspiring him, by means of his friend Hervey, with such suspicions of her constancy, as should create a coolness between them, or, perhaps, effect their total estrangement. He was acquainted with a lady in London, who he doubted not would, for an adequate recompence, assist him in his plans. Mrs. Vernon was a woman of

fashion, not extremely scrupulous in her principles, whose extravagance made her listen to any scheme that promised her emolument; so that it did not expose her to the world, and deprive her of the reputation which, by a long course of dissimulation, she had been enabled to preserve. To this woman Montague proposed that Miss Dudley should go as a companion; and, soon after Louisa left home, he repaired to the rectory with the view of working upon the good clergyman's unsuspicious temper, and making him the unconscious instrument of his villany. He asked to speak to Mr. Unwin, and, William not being at home, was shown into the parlour. "I am grieved to the soul, my dear Sir," he began, "for Miss Dudley's unfortunate situation: more particularly as my uncle's harsh proceedings towards those who sheltered her, has, in some measure,

been the occasion of her having a home to seek. I hope you will believe me when I affirm that, had I known of them, I would have spared no endeavours to divert Mr. Raynsford from his unmerciful designs." "I do believe you, my young friend, most sincerely," replied Mr. Unwin; "you are not answerable for your uncle's conduct; but what could have induced him to treat Mrs. Dobson so rigorously? I fear that Selina must have been involved in great distress by poor nurse's sudden death, and the breaking up of the business; added to the unexpected loss of her little property: how unfortunate that we were from home! Louisa is just gone to pay her a visit." "And what, my dear Sir, do you propose to do relative to Miss Dudley?" asked Montague. "She shall live with us," answered the worthy man: "you are not ignorant of her engagement to

Frederic?" Dorian said he was not; and then begged leave to suggest that, on that very account, any other residence would be more eligible for Selina: there being reason to fear that, when Frederic visited Heathdale, her being under the same roof with him might be a temptation to an earlier union than prudence would justify. "Supposing there were the danger that you apprehend," returned Mr. Unwin, "which I do not imagine; what other measure can I pursue? it is absolutely necessary that something should be done for her." "True," replied Montague; then putting himself into a musing attitude; after a moment's interval, he cried, "I have just recollected a circumstance which seems to point out a desirable plan. A particular friend of my mother, who used to notice me much when I was a boy, though I have not seen her for some

years, wrote to my uncle a few days ago, to request that he would enquire in the country for some young woman of an amiable disposition and genteel manners, to reside with her as a companion. Assuredly Mrs. Vernon would be highly delighted with Miss Dudley, and should she be inclined to accept of such a situation, I know of no one that would be more eligible for her in every respect." "Indeed it appears so," observed Mr. Unwin; "but I cannot propose it, unless she first refuse the asylum of my house; which, from her independent spirit is not unlikely." Montague thought that if this offer was made, his hopes hung but by a slender thread; yet he dared not urge his objections any further, lest his motive should be suspected, therefore replied; "Well, my dear Sir, you will proceed as you judge best. From what I remember of Mrs. Vernon she was a most charm-

ing woman, and I have lately heard her spoken of very highly. I will write to her, if Miss Dudley should approve of my scheme, and inform her of what little I know of our young friend's history: otherwise, perhaps, she may be prejudiced against her by my uncle; by whom, I was shocked to hear, Selina was insulted when she petitioned for Mrs. Dobson. Mrs. Vernon, I am sure, will attend to my recommendation, and it would gratify me exceedingly if I could be the means of repairing the injury which the innocent girl has received from a part of my family." Dorian proceeded to request that, should this take place, Mr. Unwin would not mention his being concerned in it to any one; as he feared that both Miss Unwin and Miss Dudley must, from his uncle's conduct, entertain an ill opinion of him, and possibly if Selina knew that the situation was procured

through his medium, she would not accept it. " Besides," added he, " I do not wish to make her feel a sense of obligation, which is always irksome to a generous mind: therefore, should she decline your proposal, you will only say that you have heard such a lady wants a companion; offer to apply to her in Selina's behalf, and leave the rest to me." " As you please, my young friend," returned Mr. Unwin: " though I do not think that Selina is apt to be influenced by prejudice." " Perhaps not," was Montague's answer; and, seeing Miss Unwin coming home, he wished him a good morning.

From the parsonage he bent his course to the cottage, almost despairing of success in his artifices. That Miss Dudley should refuse an offer so much to her interest as a residence at Mr. Unwin's, was, in his opinion, so unlikely, that he could not conceive the

possibility of such self-denial; and he blamed his own ill-formed plans that had perhaps been the means of removing her further than ever from his reach. Goaded by these self-accusations, he felt the torment of fiends when they are disappointed in their views of corrupting innocence, and his countenance and gestures were expressive of the tumult in his bosom: till, (like his great archetype, satan, when disfigured on mount Niphates,) recollecting that the indulgence of his passions would betray him to observation, he smoothed his brow, and, by the time that he arrived at Mrs. Warwick's, no traces remained upon his countenance of the emotions which agitated his heart. He entered without ceremony, and found Selina reading a letter which she had that morning received from Frederic. She was alone, for the good woman of the house was employed in pitying Miss

Dudley among her neighbours. Surprised at his appearance, she told him that she had not expected the honour of a visit from him there any more than at the farm. "Neither would I have ventured to intrude upon you," replied he, "but for the purpose of exonerating myself from having had any share in, or even knowledge of, my uncle's proceedings. The fear of your entertaining such unjust suspicions has alone induced me to break through your commands, and, if you figure to yourself how mortifying it is to an ingenuous mind to lie under such imputations, I hope the motive will plead my excuse." "I do assure you," returned Selina, "that I had entertained no such prejudice; therefore, if that were the only cause of your visit, you will allow me to wish you a good morning." Stung to the soul by this dismissal, Dorian retired; but he treasured it up

in his mind among other reasons to stimulate his revenge. He was met by Mrs. Warwick at the door, who had thought proper to remember that Miss Dudley would probably stand in need of some dinner, and had broken off a most interesting gossip to make the necessary preparations. She had scarcely entered, when, looking through the window she exclaimed, "Well, if here isn't the squire himself, coming in at the garden gate!" Selina started up, and saying, "Tell him, if he enquires for me, that I do not choose to see him," ran up stairs; rejoiced that she had made her escape so fortunately. Mr. Raynsford had met Montague, and asking in what humour he had found Miss Dudley, was told that she was as haughty as ever: not intending, at all events, to be denied, he opened the door, and went in. "Well, good woman," he began; "how does your

fair charge? I understand she is within, and should be glad to see her: I have something to propose for her benefit."

"I believe you may keep your proposals to yourself," replied Mrs. Warwick, who was very angry with Mr. Raynsford, and, being entirely independent of him, was determined to speak her mind: "it is likely, indeed, that you should intend her any good, after having set your wits to work to ruin those she was with! I can tell you the whole parish cries shame on your behaviour!"

Mr. Raynsford swore it was extremely hard that a man should be abused for taking honest methods to recover his own; begging her to tell Miss Dudley that if she would favour him with her company she should have no reason to repent her condescension. "She will have nothing more to do with you," answered Mrs. Warwick; "for she went away when she heard you were

coming, and bade me tell you that she did not choose to see you. It's strange you can't let her alone; but if you stay all day you'll be never the nearer." At this intimation Mr. Raynsford flew in a terrible passion; and went away, swearing at Mrs. Warwick for her insolence.

In the mean time Louisa had related to her father the substance of her conversation with Miss Dudley, and entreated him to persuade her, if possible, to come to the parsonage: which was readily agreed to by him, though Montague's insinuations had not entirely failed of their effect. In truth the amiable rector had a better opinion of Mr. Dorian than most of his neighbours: partly because he was prone to think well of others, and partly because Montague had taken no small pains to impress him with a belief of his piety. A little vanity (as no human worth is

without alloy) might have contributed to this persuasion; for Montague had often, in coming from church, hinted the good effects produced upon his mind by the sermon. When Mr. Unwin and his daughter repaired to the cottage, he kindly reproached Selina for not having applied to him for assistance; saying that as he could not but blame himself, in some measure, for the loss of her fortune, he thought justice required that he should render her every service in his power. This Selina strenuously denied. It would be very hard, she urged, that because he had done her one favour by giving her what appeared to him the best advice, he should therefore be called upon to put himself to further inconvenience on her account. He pleaded Louisa's happiness as a motive for her to live with them; but finding his arguments ineffectual, he continued, "If I cannot

alter your resolution, I must insist, at least, that while you remain at Heathdale you make my house your home: without this I cannot be satisfied, so will take no denial; you shall return with us." "You are very good, my dear Sir," replied Miss Dudley, "but did not Louisa tell you my reason for wishing to stay with Mrs. Warwick?" "She did, but it is no longer valid," returned Mr. Unwin: "for if you cannot be dissuaded from your intention of providing for yourself, I think I already know of a situation that will suit you. But I cannot tell you particulars now, nor do I think I shall at all," continued he, with a good humoured smile, "unless you will agree to accompany us: when we reach home you shall hear every thing. Mrs. Warwick do be so good as to fetch Miss Dudley's cloak." "Then you will come with us, Selina?" said Miss

Unwin, taking her hand: "how rejoiced I am! I was in hopes that my father's influence would prevail!" "I can no longer refuse your offered kindness;" answered Miss Dudley; "and if you insist on being troubled with me, I believe you must." It was now getting late, and Selina, after bidding Mrs. Warwick adieu, walked with her friends to the parsonage. William received her with the utmost kindness, and exerted himself to inspire the whole party with cheerfulness. Louisa, as well as Selina, was extremely anxious to hear what sort of situation it was of which Mr. Unwin had spoken; and as they neither of them liked to ask the question, for fear of appearing importunate, they sat in silent expectation of his beginning the subject: Selina often casting towards him supplicating looks for that purpose. They did not pass unnoticed. "I see, my dear girl,"

said he, "that you half suspect my veracity; but I will keep you no longer in suspense: tell me, should you have any objection to the office of companion to a lady of amiable character and respectable connexions?" "A servile companion I shall never make," replied Selina; "but if she is, as you say, amiable, she will not wish it. I can at least try whether this scheme will suit me, and if it should prove disagreeable, I shall not be obliged to remain." "Certainly not," returned Mr. Unwin; "while I live at Heathdale, you will ever find it a secure asylum." He then, after receiving Miss Dudley's thanks, related more at large what he had heard of Mrs. Vernon; only omitting her acquaintance with Mr. Raynsford and the Dorians. Selina thought, that the situation appeared more eligible than either of those which she had fixed upon at first: perhaps the idea of being

nearer Frederic, might, almost unknown to herself, have influenced her in this opinion. However that might be, it was agreed, that Mr. Unwin should apply to the gentleman from whom he had the information, to recommend her to the notice of his friend. For the remainder of the evening, the conversation turned on various topics, which Selina exerted herself to support with gaiety, in order to divert the attention of her friend from the subject of her approaching departure. Notwithstanding her efforts, Louisa's eyes often filled with tears as she gazed upon her; and she lamented, with anguish, that such merit as Selina possessed, should not have been placed in a more exalted situation.

The next morning Mr. Unwin called on Dorian to inform him of Miss Dudley's determination with regard to Mrs. Vernon. Montague had passed the night in a very unenviable manner:

the consciousness of an upright intention is the good man's support under every affliction, but for the disappointment of such views as his there was no consolation. In vain he racked his imagination to devise some new method of accomplishing his designs; if Miss Dudley resided at the parsonage he saw no prospect of success. But heaven, which permits virtue to endure many trials, in order that its sterling worth may be rendered more conspicuous, had decreed that vice should be for a time triumphant; and all Dorian's uneasiness vanished into air when he understood from Mr. Unwin that Selina had determined to accept the situation which he had proposed. He could scarcely restrain his transports at the information, and, as soon as the good clergyman left him, gave way to unbounded exultation in the success of his schemes. He now considered Miss

Dudley as his own, and looked forward with delight to the period when her haughty spirit should be humbled, and her virtuous dignity reduced to a level with the meanest of her sex. Full of these ideas he sat down to write to Mrs. Vernon, unfolding to her all his plans, and offering a reward proportioned to the difficulty of the undertaking, if, through her means, he should obtain the completion of his wishes. He described Selina's character, and, with many flattering palliatives of his advice, cautioned her to behave in such a manner as should insure her continuance in her house, concluding with requesting a speedy answer to satisfy his impatience.

From different motives, Montague and the family at the parsonage were equally anxious to receive Mrs. Vernon's determination. At length it came: she laughed at Dorian for really falling

in love with a country girl; told him he must have fancied difficulties where there were none; and concluded with saying, that she should be ready to receive Miss Dudley in a week, when she should return from spending the Christmas holidays in the country. Mr. Unwin was quickly informed of the latter part of this epistle; the rest Montague thought proper to alter in such a manner as might best suit the taste of his auditor.

All was now preparation for Miss Dudley's departure. Mr. Unwin insisted upon defraying the expence of her wardrobe; and Louisa wept over her work as she assisted in its arrangement. The approaching loss of her friend having quite subdued her spirits, she gave herself up to all the uneasiness which a creative imagination could suggest. "My dear Louisa," would Miss Dudley say, "why will you thus

distress yourself? I declare any one would suppose that I was going to encounter the horrors of a prison, instead of meeting a desirable asylum in the protection of a respectable woman. Who knows but that I may find another Mrs. Willoughby in Mrs. Vernon? I assure you I form very high expectations of her character, and doubt not I shall be very happy in my new situation." To this Louisa would reply only by throwing her arms round Selina's neck, and indulging in an agony of grief. Montague frequently called during the short period which Miss Dudley remained at Heathdale, striving, by the most respectful behaviour and unremitting endeavours to please, to remove any prepossession that might have been entertained against him.

Time, whom no mortal can bribe to slacken his pace, at length brought on the hour of Selina's departure. As

they sat waiting for the coach, Louisa, dissolved in tears, reclined her head upon Selina's shoulder. "Ah, how little I thought," said she, "when Frederic left us that so short a space would deprive me of you also! Fleeting indeed are our pleasures! Scarcely do we begin to know the value of our friends when they are taken from us! I might, in time, have learned to imitate your example; but my sweet monitress gone, to how many errors I shall be liable! How greatly I fear becoming unworthy of your friendship!" "Dearest girl!" replied Miss Dudley, as she kissed her cheek, "how can you talk so? While memory survives never shall I forget your disinterested kindness, never the many happy hours I have passed at Heathdale! Yet, though I must resign them for a time, I trust we shall meet again with added joy, endeared by separation. Let us

not then, my Louisa, grieve as persons devoid of hope!" "How can I forbear to grieve," rejoined Miss Unwin, "when I reflect that I, who value your company so highly, must resign it to those who, perhaps, will not be capable of comprehending half your merit; who will see you without emotion, and lose you without regret!" The arrival of the coach precluded all further conversation. Selina's tears, which she had with difficulty restrained, flowed without controul when she bade adieu to this amiable and worthy family. "God bless you! my beloved friends!" she exclaimed, as she leaned her head out of the window, and fixed a lingering look upon the peaceful abode of virtue, which the windings of the road soon concealed from her view. Sinking back in the carriage, she gave herself up to the sadly-pleasing pains of recollection; and her fancy wandered over

the various occurrences which endeared Heathdale to her memory. The face of the country was now covered with snow, and, as they journied over the wide extended heath, all looked forlorn and cheerless: how different from the scenes which had met her eyes on the road to Midhurst the preceding spring! The fields and hedges were then dressed in all the charms of renovated nature, putting out her strength, and rescuing her dominions from the torpid influence of winter. The leaves exhibited the beautiful fresh green of youth, yet undarkened by the summer's sun, yet unimbrowned by the storms of autumn: and the birds, upon every bush, chanted the praise of their Creator. Selina thought that the change coincided with the different feelings of her mind. She was then flying from persecution to the place where she hoped for, and had found, a desirable asylum,

and friends who had supplied to her the loss of her beloved Mrs. Willoughby: now, torn from those friends, she was yet uncertain what reception she might meet with in the large and populous city to which she was going. Her thoughts were at length recalled to more pleasing contemplations, by the prospect of seeing Frederic, with whom she had kept up a regular correspondence. She had written to him when the day was fixed for her quitting Heathdale, but had begged him not to meet her at the inn; as she thought that before she had explained to Mrs. Vernon the nature of their connexion, she might be displeased to hear that she had acquaintance in London. Upon her arrival she found that lady had sent her carriage to convey her to Spring Gardens, and during her short ride thither she endeavoured to summon all her spirits to support whatever recep-

tion it might be her lot to meet with: offering up a fervent, though silent, prayer to her Creator, for his powerful assistance to guard her against every temptation, and sustain her in the path of duty. When she alighted she was shown into a parlour by a servant, who told her that his mistress had not yet risen from table, but had given orders that her woman should attend her to her apartment. "I will send Mrs. Gibson to you, Madam," said he, as he shut the door. Selina, when she was left alone, could not help thinking that had Mrs. Vernon been a woman of feeling, she would have held herself disengaged on the day when she expected a total stranger: but she was yet to learn that no consideration could induce her to spend an hour alone when it was in her power to do otherwise. These reflections were interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Gibson; who

showed her to her room, and informed her that, as there was company, Mrs. Vernon thought she would like to change her dress; adding that her lady would meet her in the drawing room, as soon as she could leave the gentlemen. Selina was glad that their first interview was not to take place before strangers; and telling Mrs. Gibson that she was accustomed to wait upon herself, was once more left alone. Before she proceeded to unpack her trunk, she took a survey of her apartment. It was on the 2d floor, small, yet perfectly comfortable, and rendered more cheerful by a blazing fire: but what chiefly pleased her was a light closet, which, as the moon shone bright, she saw looked into the park. She now took out a white dress, and twisting her auburn hair in a knot behind her head, was soon in readiness to attend a summons to the drawing room. Her heart

beat quicker than ordinary as she descended the stairs:—Mrs. Vernon came forward to meet her, as she entered the room, and, taking her hand, welcomed her to town. She apologized in the politest manner for not having been disengaged on her first arrival; but said that two gentlemen, her particular acquaintance, had called unexpectedly, and she had been under the necessity of asking them to dinner. Mrs. Vernon's manners and appearance were calculated to inspire Selina with the most favourable opinion of her. She was about fifty, tall, and still possessed more than the remains of beauty: a long intercourse with the fashionable world had given her all the polish of high life, and no one was more capable of making herself agreeable when she wished to please. She talked to Miss Dudley of her friends at Heathdale, exerting herself so successfully for her

entertainment, that her protogée soon found her spirits revive, and felt the most sanguine hopes of happiness in such society. Having thus introduced Selina to Mrs. Vernon, we will look back to her lover, and see how he had passed the three months which had elapsed since his arrival in London.

END OF VOL. I.

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